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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[A PERFECT FIT.]

VIOLA HARCOURT; OR,

PLAYING WITH HEARTS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Evanda," "Tempting Fortune," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

THE POOR SEAMSTRESSES.

"Then let the trial come; and witness thou if terror be upon me: If I shrink to meet the storm or falter in my strength when hardest it besets me, do not think I am fearful and infirm of soul." A KENSIDE.

It was the dull, cheerless month of November, when thick mists and dense fogs hang over our English soil, such as chill the souls of men and make them sad, when the sky is generally overcast and of a leaden hue, when the last leaf has fallen from the trees, fluttering with a mournful rustle to the earth of which it is soon to become a part. The glad harvest-time is over, and the smiling corn, bending gracefully over the sickle, has become a thing of the past, while the cheerful tints and fruits of autumn have vanished into the long ago.

People are looking forward to a long, severe winter, calculating on the depth of the snow and the thickness of the ice. The rich, who are well housed and well clad, call a hard winter healthy, but the poor and miserable shiver as they think of the cruel time to come, when

work is scarce and the life of a man, to say nothing of his little ones, is compassed within the bars of his grate and the basket of his baker, for in the merciless winter fire and bread are the life.

At four o'clock in the afternoon it was very dark all over London. The fog hung around everything and everybody like a funeral pall. Gas was lighted in the shops, as well as in the offices. Traffic was impeded; vehicles ceased to run. Those who were abroad had to get home as best they might. The huge, impenetrable, all-enveloping yellow blanket of fog was suspended as an incubus over all.

But in spite of the fog there were to be seen shadowy forms in the darkened streets, and phantom horses dragging at a slow pace unsubstantial-looking carriages, while spectral policemen were encountered at intervals few and far between. Torches flashed occasionally, and the bell of the muffin man, irrepressible and defiant, sounded sepulchral in the distance, and the rat-tat of the postman resembled the dying echo of a pistol-shot.

In the neighbourhood of Chelsea stood an ordinary-looking house, which was only distinguished from those around it by a large brass plate on the door. The lamplighter had started early that afternoon, for he knew what was coming in the way of weather, and had lighted his lamps two hours before the usual time. Thanks to a gaslamp which stood in front of the house, the inscription on the brass plate was just discernible, and those who passed by were informed that a modiste resided there.

"MADAME ANALIE, modes et robes, de Paris."

Looking from the street, one could see in the

second floor front two windows, before which lights were burning. No doubt this was where the white slaves who make up the 'modes et robes' for ladies of fashion were toiling over their daily task; but the blinds were drawn down, and it was impossible to penetrate into the recesses of the chamber from the outside, though the imagination of the humanitarian could run riot as to the occupation of the milliner's employes. Stitch, stitch, stitch, morning and noon and night, and it's oh to be a slave along with the barbarous Turk if this is Christian work!

While the choking fog was getting, if possible, more dense, a handsome brougham drove up to the door of the milliner's. A footman jumped down from the box, and after looking carefully at the name on the brass plate, to be sure that he was making no mistake, knocked loudly, but the effort caused no one to look out of window; the street was dead.

When the door was opened a lady stepped from the carriage and entered the house, being ushered into a room on the ground floor, which was filled with costumes. On a table were the latest fashion plates. The apartment was brilliantly lighted. A cheerful fire burnt in the grate, near which stood a tall, angular Frenchwoman of a sallow complexion, dark and unprepossessing in appearance, for the vicious gleam of her eyes, combined with the extreme thinness of her lips, revealed the ill-temper of her disposition. Yet she advanced smilingly to the lady, making a low bow, and expressing her pleasure at seeing her.

"Is my dress ready?" inquired the lady, who was very pretty and aristocratic. "It is most imperative that I have it to-night for the

duchessa's ball, as I told you all along. I am surprised it hasn't reached me before. Really I shall have to change my milliner if you are not more punctual."

"Miladi will excuse me," replied Madame Amalie. "One of ze girls who work for me has gone away; one more is eel. Vat can I do? But you shall have ze costume at nine of ze clock, foi d'honneur."

"Very well. I will rely upon you. Nine o'clock will be time enough to begin to dress. I do hope in future you will keep faith with me. It is extremely tiresome to have to drive up here in this wretched weather."

"Thousand pardons, madame."

"Do not let it happen again."

"Nevaire. Madame shall always be serve of the first. Bon soir, madame; at nine of ze clock ze dress shall arrive itself at the house of you."

The lady, who was the well known Countess of Emlington, expressed her satisfaction at this promise and retired to her carriage, which drove away as rapidly as the miserable state of the weather would permit. When she was gone Madame Amalie's face assumed a deep scowl. She looked positively forbidding. The countess was her best customer, and the ball dress about which she had called should have been sent home at four o'clock that day.

"I will teach these girls," she said to herself. "Yes, mais oui, I will learn them something."

With the impetuosity of her countrywomen, she ascended the stairs two at a time, and burst into the room which we have described as having a light in it. The apartment was almost destitute of furniture. There was no carpet on the floor. The wall-paper was old and discoloured. Sitting on cane-bottomed chairs before a plain deal table were two girls, stitching away as if for dear life, while on a mattress in a corner reclined a third girl, who was sewing feebly a piece of point lace on the skirt of a dress. Her features were thin and worn, her eyes lacked lustre.

These girls were the regularly employed camp-stresses of Madame Amalie; when business was very brisk she put on more hands. In November there was not much doing in the gay world, as the upper ten were in the country or at Brighton, only a few families remaining in the metropolis.

Estelle, the one lying upon the mattress, was a Frenchwoman. She had to support an aged and invalid mother. Hard work and poor living had brought on a weakness of the system, which the cold weather had aggravated, provoking an ugly cough, the sure forerunner of consumption. She could not sit up.

The second one was Kate Stanley, a hard-working English girl, robust and healthy. The third one was Viola Harcourt, a pretty blonde with blue eyes, petite in figure, very symmetrical, with small hands and feet, delicate features, and an extremely lady-like air.

Viola Harcourt was the step-daughter of Madame Amalie, who had married her father, after his first wife's death. Mr. Harcourt was of an easy disposition, and as long as he got his pipe and his beer, with his dinner regularly, he did not mind answering the door or going of errands. It was he who took home the bundles and made himself generally useful at the bidding of his wife, who was the master as well as the mistress of the house.

She did not like Viola. Stepmothers very rarely do care for the children they ought to cherish, and poor little Viola was no exception to this rule. She was forced to work like a slave at the millinery, sometimes from six till twelve, that is to say from early morning until late at night, scarcely having sleep enough to refresh her weary frame.

Madame Amalie, or Mrs. Harcourt, had one child by her husband, a boy named Bob, who was just as much petted and spoiled as Viola was ill used, but then Bob was her child and Viola was not.

"Young ladies," she exclaimed, "how is it that the costume of ball for the Countess of Emlington is not yet perfect? I shall lose all of her custom, because you are so idle. It is talk, talk, eat, eat, all day, and no work."

"It will be finished in half-an-hour, madame," replied Viola, with a weary air. "If you had employed another girl you would have had it before."

"My word!" cried Madame Amalie, raising her hands in horror, "do you want to ruin me? I pay you enough. Hasten you, or I will fine you all the money for one day; you hear me? When it is done, Viola, you will put it in a box and take it home to miladi the countess."

Saying this she quitted the room, and the weary work proceeded.

"I'm tired of this," said Viola. "If I could get anything else to do I would not remain an hour. Madame Amalie is nothing but a slave driver, and father has not the courage to contradict her."

"What can he do, my dear?" remarked Kate Stanley. "It is her business. She keeps the poor old gentleman. Alas! we poor girls have to work too hard. I wish I had been born a man."

"I do not wish that," said Viola, "for I am content to be what I am, but this work is killing me."

"It has killed me," exclaimed Estelle. "In a few days I shall not be able to work any more. Then for me the hospital, and after that the grave. Well, I shall welcome death; it is a friend to the poor. In the grave will come rest—peace!"

She spoke in a tone of indescribable pathos and sadness. Her face lighted up with a glad expression, as if she already saw the angels holding out their welcoming arms and heard their sweet voices singing hymns of joy.

Stitch, stitch, stitch. At last the elegant and recherché ball dress of the beautiful and fashionable Countess of Emlington had the finishing touch put to it. Admiring eyes would gaze upon it in a few hours as it was swept through the crowded ball-room of a Belgravia mansion, but perhaps not one would bestow a thought upon the poor camp-stresses who with torn fingers and aching eyes had slaved day and night for nearly a week to get it done.

When it was packed up, Viola put on her hat and jacket to carry it to the aristocratic quarters in which the countess resided. In the kitchen she found her father and Madame Amalie, who gave her sixpence for an omnibus.

"Going out in this fog, Vi?" asked Mr. Harcourt. "Why you'll get lost, and I'm sure there'll be no 'busses running. Let me take the dress."

"Hold your tongue!" exclaimed Madame Amalie, with a spiteful glance at Viola. "It is that you are always thinking of the girl. What use for you to go? Miladi will try it on. Perhaps she will want some little alteration. Is it that you can sew?"

"Well, no; if it comes to that I give in," answered Mr. Harcourt. "But I'll go along with the girl and see that she comes to no harm; this fog's enough to choke a horse."

Madame Amalie stamped her foot angrily on the floor, and her spiteful little eyes flashed angrily.

"Stay where you are! Do I not feed you, clothe you, house you?" she exclaimed in a high tone.

"Worse luck," he rejoined.

"Go to ze house of work—what you call it?—union. If you not obey me, I keep you no more!"

Silenced by this threat, Mr. Harcourt subsided, and Viola went up the area steps out into the fog alone. She knew the way to Belgrave Square; it was not very far off. The dress was heavy, and she did not feel sorry when the house was reached.

Lady Emlington was anxiously awaiting her coming, and at once tried on the dress, which fortunately required no alteration, as it fitted her to perfection. Whatever her faults were, Madame Amalie could not be called a bad dress-maker. Viola was dismissed with a few conventional words of thanks.

On her way home she passed the gaily lighted portals of the Theatre Royal Vesuvius, at which a grand spectacular drama was running, and stopped to look at the gaudy posters.

While she was thus engaged she was accosted by a girl about her own age, who said:

"Why, Viola dear, is it you? I am glad."

Turning round she beheld a charming brunette, by name Lucy Travers, who had, until within a few weeks, been a work-girl at Madame Amalie's. The hard work and long hours did not suit her, so she had a quarrel with madame and left. What she had been doing since Viola did not know, but she had always liked Lucy and was glad to see her.

"Oh, Lucy!" she exclaimed, holding out her ungloved hand, the fingers of which were all pricked with the needle, "it seems like old times to meet you. What have you been doing since you left the shop?"

Lucy had nice, well-fitting gloves on, and wore a Cashmere dress, trimmed with black satin. Her little feet showed off to advantage a pair of French kid button boots, and she wore a fashionable hat trimmed with ostrich feathers.

"I am in the second row of the ballet at the 'Vesuvian,' my dear," replied Lucy Travers. "You know I was always fond of dancing. I have signed an agreement with Monsieur Dupuis, the ballet master, for five years. He pays me a regular salary whether I dance or not. There is only one drawback."

"What is that?"

"I must not get married until my time is up. That is in the agreement. Isn't it hard? It is such a long time."

"Shouldn't I like to be you?" said Viola.

"So you can, if you like to leave the shop," answered Lucy. "I will introduce you to Dupuis. How are the girls?"

Viola told her that Estelle was, she feared, dying, and after indulging in such gossip as they found mutually interesting they parted, Viola taking with her Lucy's address, so that she would know where to find her if occasion should arise.

This meeting made a great impression upon her, for it opened up a means of gaining a livelihood if she left her father and step-mother, though she did not like the stage. The glare of the footlights frightened her. What with rehearsals and afternoon performances, she knew the work to be hard. Yet it could not be worse than her present occupation.

Groping her way along the fog-laden streets, she came to the milliner's and was surprised to see a four-wheeled cab outside. She paused a moment. The door opened and a young man about twenty-three years of age descended the steps.

In the darkness he nearly ran against Viola, who looked in his face. Their eyes met, and they were soon shaking hands. The young man was Herbert Conyers, the son of Dr. Conyers, who lived up the street, and was Madame Amalie's medical attendant.

Herbert had passed for a doctor, and was his father's assistant. In this way he had been brought in constant contact with Viola when she had a slight attack of fever during the summer. To see her was to love her. Whenever Viola could get out, which was not often, she met Herbert Conyers.

Once she had had Sunday afternoon all to herself; that was a day of bliss. They went up to Kew on a river steambot, and before they reached home Bertie Conyers had become secretly engaged to Viola Harcourt, who promised that if he was still of the same mind when she was nineteen, she would marry him.

"It's a shame," he said, "a great shame, Vi, to send you out in weather like this. I wish I was my own master and could offer you a home, but you know my father's temper. If he was even aware that we are engaged, he would cast me off."

"You shall never injure your prospects on my account, Bertie," she replied. "But tell me, who is ill in the house?"

"Estelle; she has had a fit of coughing which has brought on hemorrhage of the lungs. I have given her an order for the hospital, to which she will be admitted at once, and—"

His utterance was cut short by the appearance of Madame Amalie at the top of the area steps. She made a grab at the girl's arm and dragged

her towards the gate, Herbert hurrying away, for fear of compromising her.

"Ha," cried Madame Amalie as she dragged her down the steps in a fit of ungovernable passion. "Sainte Vierge, you talking to ze young man, wasting your time. I sall teach you."

"Let go of me," said Viola, but her appeals and remonstrances were of no avail, she was pulled into the kitchen, the door was banged behind her, and she found her face slapped smartly.

Madame had often abused her and treated her unkindly for the two years she had been the wife of Mr. Harcourt, but she had never struck her before. All the blood in her body seemed to rush to her head. She was dizzy with shame and indignation. To think that anyone should dare to strike her. Never had her poor, dead mother done such a thing since she was quite a little child. What an outrage it was for this coarse-minded, ill-tempered Frenchwoman to hit her.

"Let the girl alone," she heard her father say, when she recovered herself.

"She is what you call one hussey," answered Madame. "I saw her talking to ze young man. Very nice goings on. Get upstairs and finish that jupe. No supper shall you have zis night, not one crumb."

Viola drew herself up proudly and though her tears nearly blinded her, she said in a tremulous voice:

"I have sewed my last stitch in this house."

Madame was surprised, for her step-daughter had always been so lamb-like and obedient that she did not for a moment anticipate any rebellion against her wishes.

"You defy me. I will take ze stick and beat you, mees," she cried, at the same time taking up a cane which rested in a corner.

She attempted to strike her across the shoulders, but Viola seized it in her hands, and bending it broke it in half, as if it had been a straw, throwing the pieces in the fire, much to her stepmother's astonishment.

"Good-bye, father," she said, "I am going, never to return."

"Going where, my child?" he asked, anxiously.

"I know not," replied Viola. "But I feel sure that a kind Providence will protect a poor girl who is driven from her home by the mad frenzy of a cruel stepmother."

Mr. Harcourt wiped his eyes with his handkerchief. He had been expecting this, but the blow came upon him suddenly, and was hard to bear. He would have detained her, had not his fear of his wife been so great.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Madame Amalie. "She is one good actress. Go 'long, miss, when you are cold and hungry you will come back and go to ze workroom. Your pride sall have a fall, I tell you! I! Madame Amalie!"

"Never! I will starve first," answered Viola, bravely.

She said no more, but hastened out of the kitchen. In the hall way she met Kate Stanley, who was assisting the cabman to carry Estelle into the hired vehicle which was in waiting to convey her to the hospital, the callous French milliner not taking the trouble to see whether she was alive or dead.

"Poor Estelle!" murmured Viola, as she beheld her carried gently down the steps. "Her trials will soon be over."

gloomy. She only had one friend she could go to, and that was her aunt, living in the King's Road, who kept a lodging-house; but whether her aunt, Mrs. Tomlinson, would take her in or send her back, she could not tell.

"Come and see me," said Estelle, faintly. "I shall not last long. No one will care. No one will put flowers on my grave. Oh, I could curse that hard-hearted woman who has brought me to this."

Viola promised she would visit her, and the cab drove off. She spoke a few hurried words to Kate, who began to cry at the idea of being alone in the dismal, ill-furnished workroom, exploring her not to go; but Viola was firm in her purpose, and, kissing her friend and companion, she hurried away in the direction of her aunt's house.

Mrs. Tomlinson was Mr. Harcourt's sister. She had supported herself since her husband's death by taking in lodgers. Though not very old she was infirm, her health having been bad for some years. Viola had never been a favourite of hers, and when she visited her she had been treated more as a stranger than her niece.

Recollecting this, Viola did not anticipate a very friendly greeting. She hoped to be able to obtain a shelter for the night, or she would have to wander about the streets; for Madame Amalie never paid her anything in return for her services in the workroom, thinking her sufficiently well rewarded by receiving her board and lodging, such as it was. Save the mark!

The fog had resolved itself into a thin drizzling rain, so that the prospect of walking about the streets all night was anything but agreeable; and it was with a feeling of pleasure that she arrived upon her aunt's doorstep. A ring at the bell was answered by a slatternly female servant, who grinned at seeing Viola, whom she knew very well.

"Oh, miss," she exclaimed, as Viola inquired if her aunt was at home and within. "I'm glad you have come, for you've saved me a journey. Missus is very bad. She was took with the bronchitis two days ago, and it's my opinion that the fogs are killing her. The doctor gave her up this afternoon, but she's a trifle better to-night."

"Good heavens! Why didn't you come round?" asked Viola. "Aunt might have died, and none of us would have known she was ill."

"How could I come?" replied the servant. "Haven't I to answer the bell and cook for the lodgers? A pretty state of things it would be if I was to go out! Howsoever, I meant to tell you to-night after I'd washed up. Perhaps you'd like to go to Mrs. Tomlinson's room at once. She's been talking about you to-day."

"Viola," she says, "I want Viola. I must not die till I have seen her, for I should never rest in my grave if I had that on my mind."

"What did she mean by that?"

"You know as much as I do, miss. I've told you all I heard her say," was the reply.

Viola thanked the girl for her information and hastened to the top of the house, where her aunt slept, as she always let the best rooms to the lodgers. Mrs. Tomlinson was attended by a nurse who gave her medicine, kept the fire burning, and ministered to her wants, which were not many. She was breathing with difficulty. At times her attenuated frame was racked by a terrible cough; but Viola did not consider this dangerous, so long as she could get her breath.

"Aunt, dear," said she, taking her hand in hers, "I am so sorry you are ill. Let me stay with you all night, and do what I can for you."

"It is very good of you to come to an old woman like me, my dear," answered Mrs. Tomlinson; "but if this cough does not go away, I am sure I shall not trouble any one long. Ugh! Ugh! how it does tear my poor chest. Some of the mixture, nurse; it seems to do me good."

The draught was given to her, causing the coughing to stop, which greatly relieved the sufferer, who told Viola to sit down.

"My child, I want to talk to you," she continued; "I've got something on my mind. Of course you remember your mother; she and I were never very great friends. In fact, I never liked her, and always thought your father could have done better."

"Whatever my mother was," replied Viola, "father's done worse in his second choice, for Madame Amalie is dreadful."

"I suppose so. I've heard a good deal about her carrying on. Well, marriage is a lottery. There is no mistake about that, and a really good woman is hard to find. Well, with regard to your mother. She was a quiet, reserved little woman; sly and artful I called her. Ugh! Ugh! The cough's come on again!"

There was a pause, during which more of the mixture was administered, and the old lady struggled for breath, growing almost purple in the face.

Viola propped her up with pillows, and she grew better.

"When your mother died, Viola," continued Mrs. Tomlinson, "she gave me a sealed packet, which I was to keep hidden away from everybody, and your father was never to know anything about it; but when you were twenty-one years of age it was to be given to you."

"A sealed packet!" echoed Viola, much interested.

"Yes. What is inside it I have not the remotest idea, for I put it away in a drawer, locked it up, and there it has been ever since."

"I am only seventeen. It is a long time to wait before I shall learn the contents of the mysterious parcel," remarked Viola, with a half-smile.

"Not so," said Mrs. Tomlinson. "I am very ill. Perhaps I shall never get better. I feel it my duty, under the circumstances, to give you the packet."

Viola's heart beat wildly at this declaration, for she wondered what strange secret her mother had left her as a legacy.

"Go to the table. You will see a key upon it. That will open the top drawer on the right-hand side. In it you will see the packet, which I have not seen since the day I received it," resumed her aunt.

Taking the key, Viola opened the drawer, and found as her aunt had said, a sealed parcel, which was in size about eight inches by six. It was tied with faded pink ribbon, the ends of which were carefully confined with sealing-wax. Forbearing to break it open, she placed it in her pocket, and again took a seat by Mrs. Tomlinson's bedside.

"Well, my dear," said the latter, "what is in it? Have you no curiosity?"

"I thought I would wait, aunt," answered Viola, "so that I could nurse you. Let me try and sing you to sleep. I am sure you must be tired, and sleep will do you good."

"Never mind me," cried the old lady, pettantly. "Open the packet."

Thus urged, Viola did not hesitate any longer. She broke the seal and untied the ribbon which confined it. Inside the paper in which it was enveloped she found a baby's frock, trimmed with rich lace, and having embroidered on it the letter "T," which was surmounted by a coronet. Inside this again was a sheet of note-paper, on which was written the following lines:

"This is for Viola to read when she is twenty-one years of age. I, her supposed mother, write these lines with the deepest regret, but I feel that I should not be doing my duty if I died without making a clean breast of a secret which has weighed me down for years and shortened the days of my life. Viola, you are not my daughter. Neither are you Mr. Harcourt's child. My baby died at its birth. Dr. Newton, who attended me in my confinement, proposed that he should bring me another child a few hours' old, promising me a sum of money if I would rear it as my own. In a moment of weakness I consented. He took the dead child away, and in an hour returned with a little girl in his arms. Where you came from, or who your father is, I never knew. Mr. Harcourt knew nothing whatever of the change, and has

CHAPTER II.

THE SEALED PACKET.

Yet in my lineaments they trace
Some features of my father's face.
Thou didst not give me life alone,
But all that made me more than own.

PARKINER.

ADVANCING to the cab, Viola shook hands with Estelle, whose pale face was flecked with stains of blood, and tears of sympathy came into her eyes. Was she so much better off than the poor seamstress who was going away to die among strangers? Scarcely. Her future was dark and

always regarded you as his own child. I enclose in this packet the frock you had on when you were brought to me. It has the letter 'T' upon it, and with a coronet. This leads me to believe that you are the daughter of a nobleman, and I sincerely trust that you will some day discover your parentage. Dr. Newton is still alive. He must know all. He bound me down by a terrible oath never to ask him any questions. I have not done so. No such obligation however rests upon you. I should advise you to seek Dr. Newton, if yet living, though I cannot promise that he will do anything to help you to your rights. In conclusion, dear Viola, I beg you to pardon me for the wrong I assisted in doing you."

This was all, and it was no wonder that she was deeply agitated, for this revelation opened up an entirely new realm of thought to her. Could it be possible that she was a nobleman's daughter, or was this communication only the raving of an enfeebled brain. Mrs. Tomlinson was anxious to know what was in the paper, and listened patiently to the recital which Viola gave her, but she did not attach any credence to the statement of Mrs. Harcourt.

"Ridiculous, my dear!" she exclaimed. "The idea of your being anything but what you have always been supposed to be is absurd. I had an opinion that your mother was of weak intellect for some years before she died."

"Oh, no, no!" replied Viola. "Mrs. Harcourt—I cannot now call her mother, after reading her confession—was in full possession of her senses up to the day of her death. I feel that it is all true."

"Dismiss the thought from your mind."

"Never. I shall not rest until I have seen Dr. Newton."

"What use will that be?" replied Mrs. Tomlinson. "If the doctor really did participate in a fraud, is it likely that he would admit it? You have nothing to hope from him."

Viola sighed deeply, for she saw the force of this argument. Supposing Dr. Newton had stolen her when an infant, there was little doubt that he had been well paid for doing it, and it was scarcely probable that he would do anything to expose himself. It might even be that he was not alive, for some years had elapsed since Mrs. Harcourt's singular confession was written.

Be satisfied with your lot, Viola," Mrs. Tomlinson went on. "Never give way to restless ambition. A work-girl you were born, and, in all likelihood, a work-girl you will live and die. I am sorry I gave you the packet now, for it may be the means of rendering you miserable. Get the nonsense out of your head as soon as possible. A nobleman's daughter! Ugh! Ugh! Ugh! Nurse, the mixture."

Viola was not sorry that a fresh fit of coughing brought the melancholy forebodings of her aunt to an abrupt conclusion, for the disclosures contained in the packet had given rise to a hope that something better was in store for her than a life of drudgery with Madame Amalie.

Owing to her illness Mrs. Tomlinson was very glad to have her niece with her. She agreed to accept her services until she got well, and dismissed the nurse the next morning, Viola taking her place. For many a week no change took place in the old lady's condition, but after that she began to mend. The doctor pronounced her out of danger. She only required rest and careful attention, which Viola was well able to give her.

She was thus released from all anxiety as to a home, and only occupied herself in thinking about what Dr. Newton could reveal to her if he chose. That her fate was in this man's hands she did not doubt, and she determined that the first day she could leave her aunt she would look in the medical directory for his address. Newton was a common name, and it was a pity that she didn't know his Christian name, as there was likely to be more than one Dr. Newton.

Time passed by. She had been a fortnight away from home, and she had heard nothing of Madame Amalie or her father, which proved

that if they were seeking her, they were unable to find her.

At length her aunt seeing she was looking pale nursing and watching, advised her to go out for a walk, and, with Dr. Newton in her mind, she went on her quest.

(To be Continued.)

THE FISHER'S WIFE.

A young wife stood at the cottage door
As sad as sad could be
With a troubled look, for the winds would roar
And the clouds drift to the lee.
As she whisper'd almost beneath her breath,
"God watches o'er those at sea,
Time flies on and he comes not back,
The one I love so well.
O'er the wide ocean's foaming track
The wind sighs like a knell,
And the dread fear that deadens my heart
Encircles it with a spell.

I hear a wail as the wild winds rush
Fierce and swiftly on their way,
Such tempests many a frail boat crush
That was safe at the dawn of day.
And my spirit sinks and my heart grows cold
As if turned again to clay.
I hear the moan of the fretful sea
Lashed on its tempest path;
It sounds alas! this night to me
Like a demon's mocking laugh,
As I gaze aloft at the dark, dark clouds,
To the Lord my only staff.

Lonely I watch but he comes not back,
Oh, why did he brave the waves,
Where many have found on its dreary track
In their manhood's prime their graves?
But I trust in the One who reigns on high,
That not only guards but saves."
The morning came and found her still
As at eve engaged in prayer,
And the One who judges for good or ill
Had sheltered her with his care,
For her husband's boat was off the bay
With the wind and weather fair. O. P.

SCIENCE.

THE HEART AS A MACHINE.

THE heart is probably the most efficient piece of physical apparatus known. From a purely mechanical point of view it is something like eight times as efficient as the best steam engine. It may be described, mechanically, as little more than a double force pump furnished with two reservoirs and two pipes of outflow; and the main problem of its action is hydro-dynamical. The left ventricle has a capacity of about three ounces; it beats seventy-five times a minute; and the work done in overcoming the resistance of the circulating system is equivalent to lifting its charge of blood a little short of ten feet (9.923 ft.). The average weight of the heart is a little under ten ounces (9.39 oz.). The daily work of the left ventricle is, in round numbers, ninety foot-tons; adding the work of the right ventricle, the work of the entire organ is nearly one hundred and twenty-five foot-tons. The hourly work of the heart is accordingly equivalent to lifting itself twenty thousand feet an hour.

An active mountain climber can average 1,000 feet of ascent an hour, or one-twentieth the work of the heart. The prize Alp engine, "Bavaria," lifted its own weight 2,700 feet an hour, thus demonstrating only one-eighth the efficiency of the heart. Four elements have to be considered in estimating the heart's work: (1) the statical

pressure of the blood column equal to the animal's height, which has to be sustained; (2) the force consumed in overcoming the inertia of the blood-vessels; (3) the resistance offered by the capillary vessels; (4) the friction in the heart itself. This, in a state of health, is kept at its minimum by the lubricated serous membrane of the pericardium.

WHAT IS A COLD?

It is startling how little we know about the commoner forms of disease. For example, a "cold:" what is it? How is it produced, and in what does it consist? It is easy to say a cold is a chill. A chill of what part of the organism? We know by daily experience that the body as a whole or any of its parts may be reduced to a considerably lower temperature than will suffice to give a man a cold if the so-called chill be inflicted upon the surface suddenly. Is it, then, the suddenness of a reduction of temperature that causes the cold? It would be strange if it were so, because few of the most susceptible of mortals would take cold from simply handling a piece of cold metal or accidental contact with ice.

The truth would seem to be that what we call cold taking is the result of a sufficient impression of cold to reduce the vital energy of nerve centres presiding over the functions in special organs. If this be the fact, it is easy to see why nature has provided the stimulus of a strong fit of sneezing to rouse the dormant centres and enable them at once to resume work and avoid evil consequences. This explains why the worst effects of cold do not, as a rule, follow upon a "chill" which excites much sneezing. Shivering is a less effective convulsion to restore the paralysed nervous energy, but in a lower degree it may answer the same purpose. The shivering that results from the effect of a poison on the nervous centres is a totally different matter. We speak only of the quick muscular agitation and teeth chattering which occur whenever the body is exposed to cold and evil results do not ensue. It follows from what we have said that the natural indication to ward off the effects of a chill is to restore the vital energy of the nerve centres, and there is no more potent influence by which to attain this object than a strong and sustained effort of the will. The man who resolves not to take cold seldom does.

ORIGIN OF PLANTS.

CABBAGE grew wild in Siberia; buckwheat originated in Siberia; celery originated in Germany; the potatoe is a native of Peru; the onion originated in Egypt; tobacco is a native of South America; millet was first discovered in India; the nettle is a native of Europe; the citron is a native of Asia; oats originated in North Africa; rye came originally from Siberia; parsley was first discovered in Sardinia; the parsnip is a native of Arabia; the sun-flower was brought from Peru; spinach was first cultivated in Arabia; the apple is from Europe; the horse-chestnut is a native of Thibet; the quince came from Island of Crete; the radish is a native of China and Japan; the pear is supposed to be of Egyptian origin; the horse-radish came from the south of Europe.

MARK TWAIN has been lecturing on babies, with illustrations. He starts with the remark that "babies have not been sufficiently taken into statistical account as yet: no one has thought, like I have, that there is at this moment millions of babies' cradles rocking in all directions. I can't say how many, any more than I can count the stars in the other milky way—but when one considers the combined force of the motive power moving all these cradles, likewise the future importance of many of the little coves in these cribs, the mind is lost in wonder," &c.



[THEY MEET AGAIN.]

LOST THROUGH GOLD; OR, A BEAUTIFUL SINNER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Frank Bertram's Wife," "Strong Temptation," &c., &c.

CHAPTER VIII.

HEART TO HEART.

Which none but Heaven and you and I shall hear.
SHAKESPEARE.

GEORGE ARNOLD stood for some moments watching Alice in perfect silence. Hitherto she had seemed to him a happy, careless child; it was the very joyousness of her nature that had first attracted him. True, as he knew her better, he had guessed she suffered much from Lady Aston's caprices; but no petty trials could make a girl weep as Alice was weeping now.

Arnold's heart filled with blank dismay. He spoke her name very softly, very gently.

"Alice!"

No answer came; the girl's sobs convulsed her slender frame. One would have said she did not hear him. Really his voice had smote her with the keenest pain.

"Alice, do you know you are making me very uneasy? Alice, I thought you trusted me. Won't you tell me what is troubling you like this?"

With a great effort the girl ceased her sobs, and removed her hands from her face. One she put to her heart, as though to still its throbbing, the other she offered to him. He took it and held it firmly in both of his, while he looked anxiously into her face.

It was plain no common trouble ailed her.

Four days ago he had seen her full of careless gaiety, now there were lines about her mouth, her colour was all gone, there were dark circles underneath her blue eyes, which shone with a feverish glitter even while the tears stood on their long lashes. George could only repeat his question:

"What is the matter? Only tell me how to help you."

"You cannot help me; no one can," she said at last, steadying her voice with a mighty effort. "There is nothing the matter, Mr. Arnold; only I am very foolish."

He looked hurt.

"I thought, Miss Tracy, you and I were friends?"

"Indeed, I hope we are."

"Then why not tell me what your sorrow is? You cannot persuade me that you have none, Alice. Something has taught me in the last hour that henceforth your troubles must be mine."

He sat down by her side and waited for her to speak. He seemed to think her confidence his right; and Alice, looking at him, thought how happy she might have been if only he, instead of Ralph Johnson, were to be her future lord and master.

There are some women who, without being weak, yet bow instinctively to a stronger will. Alice was one of their number. She saw he meant to be answered, and at last she said, slowly:

"Lord Aston is coming home next week."

"Surely that is not such a serious trouble. I know you have little cause to like Lady Aston; but, indeed, you must not make yourself miserable because she is coming home."

Ah! if he would only accept this reason for her tears. Alice tried hard that he should do so; but she was a very novice in the art of dissembling.

"She has never liked me. I am afraid of her," speaking of the countess.

"She shall not be all-powerful in your life for ever, Alice. My darling, will you let me take

you away from the Manor to a home that shall be all our own? Say, Alice, will you be my dear wife, the sunshine of my life?"

For one instant she was happy, perfectly happy; then came the recollection of the chain which bound her.

"I cannot, oh, I cannot. Oh, Mr. Arnold, forget all about me—forget we ever met."

He looked at her fair, tear-stained face with an eager, questioning gaze.

"Are you thinking of the ten years between us, Alice? Love could leap a greater gap than that."

"No," she said, earnestly, "oh, no."

"Then what? Don't you trust me, darling?"

"I would trust you with anything in the whole world."

"Then trust me with yourself."

"I cannot."

"Alice, you speak in riddles; what do you mean?"

"I mean that I have promised to marry someone else, and he is coming home, George." She spoke his name almost unconsciously. "That is my trouble, he is coming home to claim me."

"And you? Do you love him?"

"No, I never did. He said that would come in time after we were married. He was content to wait. I never deceived him. I told him all the truth."

George Arnold believed her.

"And do you think it will come afterwards?"

She did not answer. Her eyes looked at him in dumb reproach.

"Alice, darling, you love me. You have never cared for this other man. Why should the shadow of this miserable engagement come between us? Be my wife."

"I cannot," repeated the girl, wearily. "I have promised. I must keep my word."

"Are you a stone?" he asked, fiercely, "that you cannot feel for me? Why blight our lives for a mere chimera?"

"I do feel," she said, brokenly. "George, can't you see how hard it is for me to do right. I want you to help me—to help me against myself."

"Tell me all about it," he urged. "It was at Christmas time. He, Mr. Johnson, was at the Manor, and he asked me to marry him. I knew I did not love him, and I told him so, but he said that would come. George, I did not even know what love was, I thought perhaps I should never love anyone at all, and so I let him fix our wedding day for Easter."

"For Easter? Before we ever met?"
"Yes; but in February Mr. Johnson was obliged to go abroad; he did not want to go but he was obliged to. I think he asked Cousin Frank to let me be married first, but there was not time, and so he sailed without me."

"Yes?"—an eager, questioning yes.
"When he came to say good-bye he made me swear solemnly that I would wait for him." The girl shivered in the summer sunshine as she went on. "He said in the sight of Heaven I was as truly his wife as though the marriage service had been read over us."

"Alice, why did you not tell me of your engagement. Why," taking up her ungloved hand, "do you wear no ring?"

"I have a ring, but it is diamonds, and I never liked to wear it. Mr. Johnson was very rich, and it seemed to me that his presents were to be the price of my love. I wanted to tell you of my engagement, but at first I thought someone else would be sure to, and later on somehow I couldn't. It has been on my lips, George, often, but I could not tell you."

"And you have heard from Mr. Johnson lately?"

"This morning. He is coming home in August. That seemed to open my eyes. I did not know before why I was so much happier when I saw you. As I read his letter I seemed to understand what before I had never suspected. I meant to avoid you all I could, and I hoped you would never find out the secret," screening her burning face with one hand, "that I loved you."

"But now I know all, and you see your plan would blight two lives instead of one. What now, Alice?"

"We must part just the same. I must keep my word, only now you will help me. I think if only I did not see you it would not be quite so hard."

"And Mr. Johnson, Alice? Do you think he wants a wife who has no heart to give him?"

She blushed crimson.

"I think he loves me very much," she said, simply, "and I could not desert him now, for he is much poorer than when he asked me first. He shall not think it was his riches tempted me."

"You will be wretched?"

"I shall have done what was right. I feel as though he had left me like a captive soldier out on parole. You would never respect me again, George, if I broke my vow."

"My little love," he murmured, hoarsely. Why did I ever meet you if it was to be all in vain? And yet I cannot regret these happy months we have known each other. Alice, I came here a weary, disappointed man, and you restored my faith in all that was good and true. Must I lose you?"

"Yes. How could you ever trust me if you know I had deceived any other man for your sake?"

"Women do it every day."

"And would you have me like them?"

"No," after a long pause. "But it is hard for me to give you up."

"And it is just as hard for me," she replied, faintly, her courage giving way, and her head bowed down on her two hands to hide her grief from him.

The chimes of a distant clock rang out the hour. She rose hastily.

"Don't go," he urged. "Think, this is the very last time we two shall be together. We can never be as we have been again."

"Some day we shall be friends."

He shook his head.

"I could not. I have loved you too well for that."

His eyes were fixed on her face, as though he would imprint it on his memory for ever. When next he saw her, most likely the man who was to be her future lord and master would be beside her; he would faintly remember her as he saw her first and loved her.

No sorrow could dim her beauty. She was lovely in spite of pale cheeks and tear stains. The worst of the struggle was over now, her mind was made up: her expression was sad enough, but it had not the agonised, desperate look he had seen there first that morning.

Her fair hair had escaped from its fastenings and one long tress fell upon her shoulders. George took out his penknife and severed one glittering lock.

"You will give me this," he entreated, "in memory of our happiness. And oh, in spite of all, I can't be sorry that we have known each other."

He put the hair away in his pocket-book with tender fingers, almost as though it had been a living thing. They had both risen. The last good-bye must now be said. He and Alice might meet in the world often enough as acquaintances; but as now, as lovers heart to heart, never more.

She was firmer far than he. It seemed now that he knew her secret; that, for her, parting had lost its sting.

"Forget me," she said, softly. "Indeed, indeed it would be better for us both."

"I am not good at forgetting," he answered, bitterly. "I shall remember you while I live; give me that rose," pointing to one she wore in her dress; "at least it has been near you."

She took the flower from its resting-place, and put it into his hand. It was one of those pale, yellow roses which have no perfume, and are seldom or never used in decorations. Italians strew them over their dead; Arnold knew this, and half shuddered as he received the flower.

Then he took both her hands in his, and looked into her blue eyes with passionate fondness. It was some sort of comfort to him that those eyes would shine with love light for no other man; that Ralph Johnson could never be to Alice what he was.

"I must go," murmured Alice, for the third time.

"Kiss me first," he urged. "Surely, when you are leaving me for ever you will not grudge me one touch of your lips?"

She was willing. She raised her face and let her lips meet his in one long, lingering kiss; then, without a word, she turned from him and walked quickly through the wood towards Aston; and the man whom she had left, as he watched her retreating figure, felt that life held very little for him that was worth the living for. He had conquered his first love as soon as he found his object was unworthy. His second love would last undimmed and unweakened until his death.

CHAPTER IX.

AT THE MANOR.

Men must reap the things they sow.

SHELLEY.

Busy life reigned at the Manor, for Lady Aston had returned punctual to the very day. One week after Alice had received the news of their intentions, she was welcoming the earl and countess at the pretty rustic station which was the nearest railway communication with Aston.

This had been the countess's own request. She had written to ask Alice to meet them. She received her cordially, nay, affectionately. Having gained her own ends she could afford to be gracious to the girl who in a few short weeks would trouble her no more.

Sybil, Lady Aston was in a remarkably good humour with herself and things in general. The news had not failed to reach her that her kinsman had arrived at Trent Park and intended to

reside there. He went nowhere, saw no one, she was told. Evidently, he had come back her slave as much as ever.

Sybil had not forgotten the halcyon days which preceded her engagement to Lord Aston, days which George Arnold's presence had made bright to her. Nearly two years of married life had not altered her feelings. She still loved her cousin with the jealous passion of a woman who has loved but few things in her life. She still looked on him as her property, and firmly believed that whenever fate made her a widow he would repeat the question he had once asked in her mother's hall-room.

Lord Aston's greeting to Alice was full of its old kindness; but, for all that, the girl was struck by a great change in his appearance. The earl had always borne his age well, looking less than his sixty odd years; now he seemed changed greatly. His face was shrunken, his steps tottering. Surely a three months' absence should not have wrought such havoc as this.

But at sixty-four a life of perpetual excitement and ball-going is hardly conducive to health. Lord Aston had worked too hard in his pursuit of pleasure, and his strength had suffered. His manner to his beautiful wife had all its old tenderness, mingled now with a sort of deprecating apology. Lady Aston had ceased to make a parade of bowing to her husband's will. She let it be seen openly that she ruled him, and the silken chains were neither so soft now or so invisible as Alice had remembered them.

"Lord Aston will soon be himself in the country," she said lightly, to Alice. "I think London has worn us both to threadpapers."

"You are looking very well," replied Miss Tracy, hardly knowing what answer was expected of her.

Lady Aston smiled, not ill-pleased, and said, kindly: "I cannot return the compliment, ma chère, for you look positively dreadful. One would say you had not been to bed for a week. Your eyes are starting out of your head. What on earth have you been doing with yourself, child?"

"It has been so hot," said Alice, languidly. "I never felt such a summer."

"Well, you must try and get your roses back quickly. I expect Mr. Johnson would scold us sorely, if he could only see you now."

"Oh, I shall be all right long before he comes."

"Indeed, then you must make haste. If he sails in the "Windsor Castle," he will be here quite by the twentieth of August."

It was then the fifteenth of July. Five weeks more of freedom. Alice gave a sigh of relief.

"And have you been making acquaintance with my cousin? I hear he has really put in an appearance at Trent Park at last."

"Mr. Arnold? Yes, I have seen him. He has been at the park for ever so long."

The carelessness of the reply completely deceived Lady Aston. She imagined Alice might be on bowing terms with George. Possibly the old doctor had introduced them. That they were friends, or something more than friends, she never guessed. In fact, Lady Aston still chose to look upon her cousin as still wearing the willow for her own rejection. That he could have eyes for another woman's beauty she did not believe.

"How are the children?" interrupted the earl, waking up from a reverie.

"Very well. Adela was so disappointed you did not return in time for her birthday. You know she was thirteen yesterday?"

"Thirteen! How time goes," said Adela's stepmother, lightly. "Why in four years she will be coming out."

"Not yet awhile, I hope," said the earl gravely. "Her head will be turned by fortune-hunters soon enough, poor child!"

"Fortune-hunters?" repeated his wife, questioning. "Really, Lord Aston, what a strange idea. Why Adela and Gertrude are nothing more than other well-born young ladies."

"Gertrude, I grant you; but Adela is my

heirress. You forget she must be some day Countess of Aston."

"True," said my lady, shortly, "I did forget."

And Alice saw by the cold, angry look in her eyes that it was a bitter blow to her that she had no child to succeed to its father's honours, no young heir to be proud of. At the earl's death Aston Manor would be hers no longer. It must pass together with her title to an awkward, unfashionable girl in her teens.

A day or two passed, the earl seemed better, more like his old self as he walked about his estate, or talked to his little girls. My lady was very gracious to Alice, and discussed very fully the arrangements for her wedding, which she intended should take place early in September. And Alice went on her way quietly, dreamily, and almost as a person asleep, often asking herself which was really Alice Tracy—the girl who had wept such bitter tears at George Arnold's side, or she who now seemed only a model or lay figure on which Lady Aston's maid tried silks, and lace, and gems, and all the paraphernalia of a fashionable tresson.

Meanwhile, she had not seen her lover since that morning when each learned the other's secret. Lady Aston openly expressed her surprise that he did not call; but certainly he did not appear in a hurry to assert his claims to relationship. The countess had been at Aston more than a week, when, one afternoon, a servant announced:

"Mr. Arnold."

They were alone in the drawing-room, Alice and the countess. The latter leant back in a luxurious easy chair, winding a skein of silk, which Alice stood holding for her. They formed a rare picture, these two, each perfect in their style. The dark, regal beauty of Sybil, decked in silk and gems, the slight, girlish form of Alice, in a simple summer muslin. Arnold had loved them both at different times in a widely different fashion. Both had loved him, nay, loved him still; but as he entered the drawing-room he had eyes and thoughts but for one.

And she, at the sound of the familiar step, grew first hot, then cold; then dropped the silken threads from her fingers, and wondered in dismay what Lady Aston would say to her carelessness. But my lady was not thinking of Alice; her dark eyes beamed with pleasure, a rare smile came to her lips as she started up, exclaiming:

"George."

"Lady Aston." And Alice thought his voice had a harsher ring.

"You have come at last. I thought you never meant to come at all."

"I assure you I value Lady Aston's interest very highly," he said, politely, just touching her offered hand and letting it go.

"Let me introduce you to my husband's ward, Miss Tracy. I believe, though, you have met before."

"Yes," answered Arnold, awkwardly, "we have met before. I hope you are very well, Miss Tracy."

"Very well, thank you."

A blank pause ensued. It was impossible that these three should be at ease together. Lady Aston ascribed all George's embarrassment to his affection for herself. She thought about for some excuse to get rid of Alice.

"Have you seen Lord Aston?" she asked George, knowing perfectly well her husband had taken the children for a long-promised drive.

"Not yet. I hope to have that pleasure before I leave."

"Alice," said my lady, sweetly, "would you mind telling the earl that Mr. Arnold is here. He would be so grieved to miss him."

Half wondering she did not send a servant, but unutterably relieved at the chance of making her escape, she rose at once.

"You will find him in the library, I think, dear," directed the countess.

George Arnold opened the door for Miss Tracy with scrupulous respect. For one instant their eyes met. His filled with warmest love,

hers with a gentle reproach. Another instant and she was gone, and he was alone with the Countess of Aston, whom, as Sybil Vavasour, he had once wildly loved.

CHAPTER X.

"HICKLE IT GENTLY."

Some in his bed, some in the deeps sea,
Some in the large field.

CHAUCER.

ALICE TRACY soon found that her errand was a vain one. Lord Aston had started with his daughters in the pony-carriage for a long country drive, they would not be home for some time. Alice crept upstairs to her own room. It did not occur to her that she ought to return to the drawing-room and give an account of her mission.

From the window she saw Mr. Arnold ride away some half hour afterwards, and when she rejoined Lady Aston she found the countess silent and distraite. She had not spoken a single word to her companion when the bell rang for dressing.

After that Mr. Arnold often came to the Manor. He was evidently a great favourite with its lord, and the children regularly adored him. Lady Aston had sweeter smiles for him than for any other visitor, and Alice hid her secret as best she could.

With her his intercourse was of the shortest, scantiest kind; save a mere formal greeting and farewell, he seldom spoke to her at all, and yet his eyes followed her every movement. He came only to the Manor to see her face, the sweetest face to him that Heaven ever made.

Her engagement was openly discussed before him. Lady Aston even confided to him the details of her arrangements for the wedding, and begged him to be present at it. George refused shortly, almost rudely:

"I don't care for weddings, I would rather go to a funeral."

And my lady lowered her eyes and looked on the ground in secret repentance. Of course he would not care for weddings now that she herself was another's.

As for Alice, she had but one wish, one aim—to avoid Mr. Arnold to her utmost. She was not sure of him, and, alas, she was not sure of herself until Ralph Johnson came to claim his bride. Her prayer was that she and George might meet only in the presence of other people. What need for them to have the bitterness of parting twice?

Ralph Johnson must soon be here. He had telegraphed that he had sailed in the "Windsor Castle." One morning the earl told Alice that the ship had passed Gravesend, and the morrow certainly, perhaps that very day, her betrothed would be at the Manor.

Alice received the news very calmly, with no expression of joy or sorrow. It was my lady who discussed the chances of Mr. Johnson arriving in time for dinner. My lady who spoke of the gay wedding they would soon have, and the pleasant gatherings that should take place at Greatwood when the fine old house had a mistress.

Alice Tracy lingered long over her toilet that evening. She dressed herself with anxious care. Love she could not give to Ralph, but all else must be his. For him she must make the most of her one gift—her beauty. To him she must show all outward care and deference. With her whole heart she would strive to make his happiness, though it must rise on the grave of her own.

An intense sense of honour, a rare truthfulness, had this gentle daughter of the Dentons. "Parole d'honneur," was, to her, no empty phrase. She would have suffered anything rather than break her word.

That day had seemed the length of weeks to Alice. The children's chatter, Lord Aston's kindly talk, and my lady's amiable platitudes fairly tortured her. She went to her own room very early in the afternoon on the plea of dressing early in case Mr. Johnson came, really to enjoy the only relief open to her—solitude.

Later on, when Adela and True were in the schoolroom, and the dressing-bell had sent the earl and countess to their respective toilettes, she came downstairs, and stealing into the empty drawing-room, seated herself by the open window. She wore white, soft, silky white, made long and flowing. For her sole ornament deep roses nestled in her bright hair and at the fastening of her dress; and her only jewel the diamond ring Ralph had placed on her finger.

The last rays of the setting sun shone in upon her beauty. She looked a betrothed of whom any man might be proud. Presently her two hands were taken in a firm grasp. Waking from her reverie and looking up, she saw George Arnold.

"Is this kind? Is it generous?" she asked, reproachfully.

"I must be near you. I cannot keep away. Besides, the countess asked me to dinner. Why should I refuse? Won't you speak to me?" he went on, sadly. "Don't you know that after to-night I may never see you again? I can't come here to see that man gloat over his good fortune."

"Don't speak ill of him, we have both done him wrong enough."

"I don't see it."

"Alice."

"Yes."

"Are you sure it is not too late even now, my darling? You don't know the life you are condemning yourself to, my own love; let me take you away, let me make you my wife."

"And the man I deceive, whose trust I abuse, what of him?"

"Is all pity, all commiseration to be for Johnson—have you not a thought for me?"

"Indeed I have, I have too much for you to let you marry a wife unworthy of you; and I should be unworthy, George, if I came to you with a falsehood on my lips."

"I would rather have you so," he murmured hoarsely, "than give you up."

"Then you would lower the woman you love, you would make my faithlessness a by-word, a public scandal."

"Alice, do you love me so little as to care for the world?"

"I must care for your sake; your wife should be above reproach, not a jilt. That is what people would call me, George, they would say I did it for money; that you were rich and he was poor."

"But he is not poor, is he?"

"He is not nearly so rich as he was, he must not lose me as well as his fortune."

"I would take you away, where no one who knows you now would ever find you; we would live for each other, and I would spend my whole life in making you happy."

"George, don't tempt me!"

"I don't tempt you. I only beg you to have pity on yourself and me, Alice, for the last time have pity on my love!"

So engrossed were they with each other that neither heard the rustle of a silken train. How in the gathering gloom of the summer twilight could they tell they had a listener? But now before Alice could reply, a voice sounded in the distance.

"Alice, Alice! are you here?"

It was the countess. She stood at the drawing-room door. Apparently she had just come downstairs, in reality she had been in the drawing-room some twenty minutes, so near the lovers that she heard every word of George Arnold's pleading, every word of Alice's reply. Now calm and stately as ever, untrifled, and unaltered in manner, she spoke to Alice in the half-caressing tone which was my lady's nearest approach to tenderness.

"Why are you sitting in the dark, child? Ring for lights."

"Are you not coming?" asked Alice, for the countess stood at the door irresolute.

"Yes, but ring for lights. I cannot bear what the children call blind man's holiday."

Mr. Arnold came up then.

"You see I accepted your invitation, Lady Aston."

Although he was always George to her he

never called her by any but her husband's name.

"Yes, and I was not here to welcome you. I confess I make a shocking hostess, George."

And who could have guessed from her manner the fury of jealous anger raging in her breast towards these two. In her eyes Alice was the worst offender. A woman can easier forgive a man for being faithless to her than the woman whose charms make him faithless. If hatred could kill, Alice Tracy would have yielded up her life then.

Servants came, and the large drawing-room was soon bright with the light from many chandeliers.

"Ah!" said my lady, graciously, "that is as it should be, Alice, a bride-elect ought always to be in white. Don't look so anxious, child. If Mr. Johnson does not come here to-night he will be with us early in the morning. You will have years enough to spend together without mourning over one day."

"Are you going to wait dinner for Mr. Johnson?" asked George, coldly, looking at his watch; Lady Aston's little speech had irritated him to the last degree.

"Well, I really think we ought to give him half-an-hour's grace; but if you are very hungry, George, I will order dinner at once."

"On no account. Pray do not alter your arrangements for me, Lady Aston."

Just then the earl came in. Clearly something unusual had happened, for his kindly face looked full of trouble. He greeted George hastily, and then turned at once to Alice.

"My dear, the children have been looking for you everywhere. I wish you would just go to the schoolroom and say good-night to them."

Surprised, but suspecting nothing, the girl rose to do his bidding. Lord Aston closed the door after her with scrupulous care, and then walked over to his wife's side.

"Sybil, will you go and break it to her? Poor girl, he's dead!"

"Dead! Who? What not Mr. Johnson?" asked my lady, honestly excited for once.

"Yes, he died suddenly on the voyage home. They buried him at sea. There are letters and things coming, but I've only just had the telegram."

My lady did not rise, and he went on impatiently:

"Do go to her, Sybil, and break it gently to the child. Remember, in another week she would have been his wife."

Sybil, Countess of Aston, did not refuse to do her lord's bidding, but as she went to the schoolroom, a bitter sense of disappointment raged at her heart. George loved Alice. Alice was free. If no one on earth else regretted Ralph Johnson, the countess did most sincerely. In Lady Aston he had at least one true mourner.

(To be Continued.)

BROWN v. WHITE BREAD.

I BELIEVE very firmly in our good English household white bread. One hears a good deal, and reads a good deal, of the waste in grinding off the outside husk, which contains nutritious gluten. The apparent economic waste is palpable enough. On the other hand, the silicated husk of all cereals is apt to be irritating. It hurries the digestion, quickens the passage of food through the intestinal tract, and I am inclined to believe that the actual physiological waste is greater in a brown bread than in a white bread diet. It is easy to take a superficial view of this question, and superficial reformers are always wanting to turn the world upside down. The instinct which has led to the preference of white bread over brown in places and under circumstances where the two can be had side by side, is nothing else than the crystallised experience which has taught people unconsciously that they are more comfortable after eating the white bread, and that the solid household bread, which is the staple food of the

working-classes of this country, is in the end the most sustaining.

A good deal is to be said in favour of some of the forms of "whole-meal bread," in which the husk is partially ground off and the inner pellicle of the grain is very finely ground, and mixed in that condition with the white flour. Moreover, it is undoubtedly a fact that under certain circumstances, in lymphatic temperaments, and in conditions tending towards scrofula, where the diet has to be carefully supervised, and in certain forms of dyspepsia, where something like mechanical excitation of the intestinal tract is useful, whole-meal bread is an extremely valuable article of diet. But those are cases which I am not considering. For the working man, for the poor man, and for every-day use, I doubt whether anything has yet been produced in any country of the world which is equal to the English household bread. —E. H.

"HONEST JOHN."

HONEST JOHN, a plain son of labour,
Grateful for the little he got,
Was true to himself and his neighbour,
And never complained of his lot.

I have seen him in deep affliction,
When his sad heart was wrung with grief,
Then his speech was a benediction,
Though his sorrowful words were brief.

He craved not for fame nor position,
Each morning saw duty begun;
Content with his toil and condition,
He rested when labour was done.

His home was not mere walls and ceiling,
The enclosure in which to be fed,
But a sweet restful place, revealing
Contentment, that sweetened his bread.

No curtains of lace ever shaded
The windows, no plate marked the door;
No carpets in colours, well braided,
Were outspread on the sanded floor.

Yet his lines had fallen in places
That were pleasant, giving beauty to life;
At home he was greeted with faces
Of affectionate children and wife.

And he had a kind word for others,
Whether they were the rich or poor;
He said that all men are brothers—
Hospitality smiled at his door.

He was up at day's early dawning,
Thankful for his humble fare,
With a face as bright as the morning,
And a soul as buoyant as air.

G. W. B.

PRIME OF LIFE.

Between the ages of forty-five and sixty a man who has properly regulated himself may be considered in the prime of life. His matured strength of constitution renders him almost impervious to an attack of disease, and experience has given soundness to his judgment. His mind is resolute, firm and equal; all his functions are in the highest order; he assumes mastery over his business; builds up a competence he has laid in early manhood, and passes through a period of life attended by many gratifications. Having gone a year or two over sixty, he arrives at a standstill. But athwart this is the viaduct called the turn of life, which, if crossed in safety, leads to the valley of old round which the river winds, and then beyond,

without boat or causeway, to affect his passage.

The bridge is, however, generally constructed of fragile material, and it depends upon how it is trodden whether it bends or breaks. Gout and apoplexy are also in the vicinity to waylay the traveller and thrust him from the pass; but let him gird up his loins and provide himself with a fitter staff, and he may trudge on in safety and with perfect composure. To quit metaphor, the "turn of life" is a turn either into a prolonged walk or into the grave.

The system and powers having reached the utmost expansion, now begin either to close like flowers at sunset or break down at once. One injudicious stimulant, a single fatal excitement, may force it beyond its strength, while a careful supply of props and the withdrawal of all that tends to force a plant will sustain it in beauty and vigour until night has entirely set.

PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS.

THE DRAMA.

OLYMPIC THEATRE.

THERE have been two dramatic revivals. At the Olympic the farcical comedy of Messrs. Bronson Howard and Frank Marshall, named "Brighton," originally produced at the Court, where it long enjoyed a decided success, has again proved acceptable to an average audience. The piece is signalised by its eccentricity, and prevails on account of its absurdity. The interest is centred in its hero, Robert Sacket, who makes love to every woman with whom he becomes acquainted, a character which exactly suits Mr. Charles Wyndham, who, by his volatile manners, reconciles the spectator to the incoherences both of word and act. The other characters are personated with skill and spirit. This drama is preceded by a two-act farce, entitled "My Enemy," written by Mr. R. Reece, and nearly as funny as the more elaborate drama that follows. The hero is a certain superstitious individual, named Miserimus Omen, to whose delusions Mr. E. Righton gives effectually the aid of his talents, much to the amusement of the audience. The change made in the programme may conduce to the success of the house, which has of late had to struggle with public apathy.

FOLLY THEATRE.

THE revival at the Folly was a morning performance of Mr. H. Byron's "Cyril's Success," in which the author himself sustained the part of Matthew Pincher, the literary hack, in a manner which made every cynical remark tell with a demonstrative power. Miss Emily Thorne was Pamela Grannett, the schoolmistress, and, in the great scene with Pincher, admirably realised the situation. The comedy itself has remarkable merits, and was very efficiently represented throughout. The re-appearance of Mr. Toole in "Paul Pry" and "Domestic Economy" evoked much applause.

LONDON BALLAD CONCERTS.

THE evening was chiefly devoted to Irish songs, among which, "Silent, O Moyle," by Mr. Edward Lloyd; "The Legacy," by Mr. Santley; and "Terence's Farewell," by Miss Mary Davies, were noticed for the excellence with which they were rendered. Three of the new songs were repeated amid great applause. Madame Mary Cummings won a deserved encore by her admirable singing of Claribel's "Children's Voices;" and "The Cough and the Crow," sung by the London Vocal Union and Mr. Stedman's Boy Choir, was a complete success. The boy who sang the first solo has a charming voice. Pity that such "a thing of beauty" will not be "a joy" for more than a few brief months. And,

finally, we must compliment Mr. Sidney Naylor that renowned accompanist, for his attractive pianoforte solos on themes from Pauer and Welhi.

ALBERT HALL.

THE concert given by the London Sunday-School Choir in the Albert Hall was honoured by the presence of the Duke and Duchess of Teck and their daughter, the Princess Victoria, attended by Lady Caroline Cust and Colonel Greville. The object of the association is the improvement of part-singing among Sunday-School teachers and scholars and the cultivation of Christian union among Sunday-school workers of all denominations. Out of a full strength of 8431 members, from 167 schools in London, 1600 voices of children and adults were assembled in the orchestra, and Mr. Luther Hinton conducted. In the first part of the programme, consisting of sacred music, William Jackson's "Te Deum" was very well given. "Praise ye the Lord" (W. F. Sherwin) and "The World's Jubilee" (Harrison) were encored. Of the miscellaneous music constituting the second part, the Tyneside song "Weel may the keel row," "Hark, the Bells," "The March of the Men of Harlech," and the "Laughing Chorus," all given with good effect, were re-demanded. Arrangements are being made for the celebration in London in June next of the centenary of the foundation of Sunday Schools in this country by Robert Raikes.

MR COLMEE'S BLIND CHOIR.—A concert was given by this choir on the 29th ult. It was evident that the blind amongst the audience were possessed of musical understanding, and were capable of discriminating the degrees of merit, by their judicious bestowal of applause. With no conductor's baton to keep them together the singers could only follow, not the direction of an individual will, but the guidance of a collective intuition. The concerted pieces given were creditable alike to the teacher and to the taught.

At the close of the pantomime season the Imperial Theatre will be devoted at night to the use of amateurs for theatrical entertainments, concerts, readings, &c., and special arrangements will be made for the production of pieces by untried authors. It will, however, continue open under Miss Litton's management as a regular afternoon theatre.

MESSES. JAMES AND THORNE are actively engaged in rehearsing a new piece. Meanwhile all should see the "Road to Ruin," since it may happen that this favourite old comedy of Holcroft's cannot be again witnessed with such a complete cast. The new piece shortly to be produced is to be called "Ourselves" and is from the pen of Mr. Burnand.

TWICE REJECTED;

OR,

THE NAMELESS ONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Baronet's Son," "Who Did It?" &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXII.

Throned in the vaulted heart, his dread resort,
Inexorable conscience holds his court;
With still small voices the place of God's alarms,
Braces his mask'd brow, his lifted hand disarms.

"HAVE you heard the latest news from the old country, Fleming?" inquired a gentleman who had been partaking of one of the graceful, light, appetising dinners of an Italian hotel in company with an English friend, now returning from a prolonged tour in the south of Europe, which was at that period somewhat more difficult and monotonous than in these days of railways and of telegrams flashing all over the continents of the world.

"That is a very vague question, my good fellow," said the Viscount Fleming, yawning lazily, as if the languor and far niente of the sweet south had had some effect on him during his residence among the "children of the land of poetry and song." "I am almost too completely behind the times to fully appreciate what is going on. There might be an earthquake or a change of dynasties, and yet no one feel very much inclined to say 'cui bono.' What does it matter now?"

"Traitor! dolt! Turk! infidel! heretic!" exclaimed Sir C. Dunmow, for it was that baronet who had asked the leading question. "Better stay in these apathetic, miserable quarters if you are so bewitched by their indolent apathy. To my idea, better fifty years of Europe than a cycle at Catray."

"Perhaps; but what is the startling information you have to give me? Will it be too much for my nerves? I am very delicate just now?" said Lord Fleming, drawlingly.

"It all depends on your view of things," replied Sir Charles; "to me it is a capital joke. It is just a judgment of practical justice. The handsomest heiress in London has thrown over a conceited poltroon and accepted the offer of an honourable man, who had been abominably insulted by the fellow she has jilted."

"That sounds all right; but I say, Dunmow, I have an old-fashioned dislike to jilting in all its moods and tenases. Of course there are exceptional, but very rare and suspicious cases, and I fancy I might not like them to be played off on myself."

"My dear Fleming, there is no doubt in this case, not at all. The fact was that Dunallan, whom you must remember at Eton and Oxford, was dangling in a true coxcomb style after this handsome heiress, supposing she was only waiting for him to throw the handkerchief. But the Marquis of Mayfield, who, I fancy, you did not know so well, had the same tastes, and knew his own mind a precious deal better. So after being insulted by Dunallan, and sending me off with a challenge in due form, he coolly received a refusal to fight, on conscientious objections, of course, only that in this case 'a fellow should be more careful not to tread on other's toes.' Of course he is posted up as a cowardly dastard, and went off to the Continent to escape the disgrace. Lady Agatha is ignorant of all that has taken place."

"And she has accepted Mayfield?"

"Certainly. The papers announce it, and I have a letter from a friend of mine well up in all gossip of the kind, and he says that all is going on rapidly, and settlements talked about already."

"Rather hard lines on Dunallan."

"I don't agree with you. He is a dastardly coward. If I were a woman I'd have certainly scouted such a fellow," returned Sir Charles, raising his glass of claret to his lips as he spoke. It was jerked from his fingers by a sudden and sharp blow that made his ears tingle, and sent the wine over his coat and waistcoat with damaging effect. He was breathless with astonishment for a moment, and ere he could recover another cuff on the other ear again stunned his bewildered senses. He looked up so soon as the flashing glitter before his eyes permitted him to distinguish objects, and saw the flushed and angry countenance of Lord Dunallan glaring fiercely at him.

"Yes," exclaimed the angry peer, "take that and that for basely maligning an absent and honourable man, and telling falsehoods of a high born lady at a public and foreign table."

Sir Charles had recovered himself now. There was no alternative in such a case, and he calmly rose from his chair and faced his assailant.

"Lord Dunallan, I will not forget myself so much as to return your blows. They are what may only be expected from a man such as you have shown yourself. But I tell you to your face what you have overheard, that you are a coward and a poltroon; that if you have no courage to resent the imputation you shall be horsewhipped and posted in this city and in our own metropolis, so that you will be ashamed to show your face in society. Now, elect your

choice. Lord Fleming will kindly witness your apology or your acceptance of my terms."

Lord Dunallan's extreme passion was somewhat abated now, and he had leisure to view like a man of the world his position.

"Be so good, in the first instance, to make the matter clear, Sir Charles," he said, sternly. "Was it of myself and the Marquis of Mayfield you were speaking so freely?"

"Precisely so."

"And you distinctly state that the Marquis of Mayfield has been accepted by Lady Agatha Penrhyn, and that their marriage is being arranged?"

"Such is my information, the correctness of which I do not doubt," returned Sir Charles.

"Then I repeat the terms I before used—you are a disgraceful slanderer and newsmonger, and I defy your malice, and will punish it as it deserves," returned Lord Dunallan, wrathfully.

Sir Charles quickly turned to his companion.

"Will you act for me in this matter, Fleming? You have been witness of the whole," he said, coldly.

The Viscount Fleming shrugged his shoulders deprecatingly.

"Of course, if you wish; but it's all very foolish and very needless. Why not apologise mutually and shake hands over a cigarette and a glass of Madeira. It is a great deal too much trouble, and life is too short for such disturbances in a rational man's idea."

"It is impossible, Fleming; you must see it presently. A man of honour never can tolerate such an insult," exclaimed Sir Charles. "Lord Dunallan, apologise and retract what you have said and done publicly and fully, or else give the name of a friend on whom Lord Fleming can wait. I will not sit down a second time so quickly as a principal as I did as a second. I'll horsewhip you first."

Lord Dunallan scornfully turned away.

"I repeat what I have said; that is my apology. As to a second, you can act for us both, Lord Fleming. I fear no foul play, and the matter is best kept from further scandal. You can call on me at the Hotel Nice this evening or to-morrow and arrange the terms."

And he turned on his heel and left the room.

"Dunmow, this is idioty; you are taking on you another man's quarrel," remonstrated the viscount.

"I am avenging my own. Spare your breath, my good fellow. It is all settled, and Heaven defend the right, which said 'right' means, of course, your humble servant," replied Sir Charles, scornfully. "I know what I'm about. I'll put the fellow within an inch of his life, but I'll not kill him! I've no taste for a trial for 'Wilful Murder'; it's so vulgar. Arrange for to-morrow morning, my good fellow; I hate long engagements."

And the baronet filled his full glass without his fingers trembling with the sparkling bumper, and drank it off, perhaps to drown thought. Meanwhile his adversary returned to the Hotel Nice, where he had taken up his abode with mingled feelings of anger, and a natural repugnance to the fate which awaited him and the tidings he had just heard.

They were in truth more stunning and painful than he would have credited, though even now he could not but confess to himself that there was but little real or genuine love in the emotion he was suffering. But there was mortified pride and ambition, ay, and a natural sense of shrinking in the very prime of life and prosperity from the near approach of death in the dark mood that came on him like a heavy cloud when he cast himself down on the nearest chair in his room, and leaning his head on his hand, began to muse over the past and present.

Agatha was lost to him, and in the most humiliating manner, torn from him by his rival well nigh without a struggle. True, he had not really loved her. There had not been the fascination about her that surrounded fair Leila Lorraine like a halo of soft light. But she was a prize to win.

High-born and handsome and an heiress, he would have been the envy of the town, and what was more, his ambition would have alike been

swelled and gratified by her possessions. And the man he had despised and insulted was now in the very place he had occupied, while he had more chance of a grave than of a bridal feast; a funeral pall than wedding fanfare; of an executor than a best man. And there was a cold chill at the idea of this deliberate struggle for life, in which the only alternative was being the murderer or the murdered, the injured or the maimed.

"Idiot that I have been," he murmured. "I should have been a wiser man to have persevered in my pursuit of that fair, innocent girl without name or fortune, and presented her to the world all proudly as my bride than incur this danger and humiliation from the proud daughter of the wealthy marquis. Ah, I could have loved her, and surely gratitude, if naught else, would have won her love in return. Ah, a man looks differently on life when he has but a few hours between him and—death!"

Lord Dunallan was a man, however, and a brave one, too, and after the first natural burst of regret and shrinking repugnance, he roused himself from the fit of depression and nerved himself for the worst. He plunged his eyes into a bath of cold water and re-arranged his hair and toilette with an almost affectation of particularity and neatness, and then swallowing a glass of a restorative liquor, he coolly sat down to await the event.

He was not long kept in suspense. Ere an hour had elapsed Lord Fleming was announced, and in a few brief minutes the whole was arranged. The time and place of meeting; the precaution against interruption, and for the tending of the wounded were all quickly entered into and satisfactorily settled.

Then the "second" left, promising to be at the appointed place of meeting at six the next morning with all the necessary instruments for the deadly struggle, and a surgeon to come to the aid of the wounded. Which would be most to be pitied in such a case—the victim or the injurer?

Lord Dunallan had good and chivalrous feelings enough to doubt whether it was not best to fall, than to live with the blood of a fellow creature on his devoted head, and his subsequent arrangements, the letters he wrote and destroyed, and the disposition of his effects and personal belongings, were all made in a sad presentiment of his approaching fate.

There was one jewelled ring that he always wore, which he wrapped up and directed to "Miss Lorraine," if she could be discovered by his executor. And the few lines written in the envelope told the lonely girl of his sympathy and interest in her, and ended by the few touching words:

"LEILA, do not condemn me! Had I been under your influence I should have been a better and a happier man. Think of me as one who had all that the world could give, and who yet lived an unloved life and died a mysterious death. It may perhaps soothe you in your harder fate. Wear this ring in memory of one who could have loved you with a deep and passionate love had not my pride and ambition come in the way."
DUNALLAN.

A few haughty lines to Agatha, breathing the bitter resentment with which his whole soul was burning, and predicting for her the remorse and misery that would justly be her punishment, was then penned and left for despatch, while the packet to Leila was placed in his own desk, with directions for its being forwarded to its owner whenever discovered. Now all was done, and he sought his bed for a few hours' rest. It was aught but a quiet slumber that closed his eyes, after an interval of restlessness and feverish tossing.

Still he did have sufficient slumber to calm his mind and steady his hand for the morning's terrible deed, and when he rose he was prepared to meet his fate as a brave man should encounter peril and death.

It was the dawn of a beautiful morning in the early spring which greeted his eyes, and the freshness of the balmy Italian atmosphere played on his face as he stepped forth. It was

a strange and awe-striking feeling to think that he might never see that sun rise, and never feel that air more—that he might be taken back to the place from which he was now walking forth with free and voluntary steps, and that from that house, which he had but used as a temporary resting place, he might be carried to his last home.

But he resolutely cast from his mind thoughts that were so thoroughly unnerving, and when he came at last to the place of that terrible trust there was no trace of such weakness in his look or his mind.

Sir Charles Dunmow was there, and Lord Fleming with him, while in the vista was a figure that the young nobleman guessed intuitively to be the surgeon who was waiting the result of the miserable strife.

Sir Charles looked carelessly around. In truth he was a practised duellist, and perhaps was by no means sorry to bring to task the man who had scornfully ignored and declined the meeting of which he had been the agent. The preliminaries were soon arranged. The principals sternly declined the accustomed ceremony of shaking hands before beginning the fatal struggle for life.

They were carefully placed, and the ground accurately measured by Lord Fleming, who, to do him justice, showed such perfect impartiality on both sides as to exclude the faintest suspicion of partisanship.

And then came the fatal word "One!" "Two!" "Three!" and the handkerchief was dropped. The sharp click of the pistols was heard at one and the same time. There was a slight exclamation—perhaps a groan, though scarcely amounting to one, but rather a slight ejaculation forced immediately from the sufferer. One had fallen! The other, to judge from the blood that trickled down his dress, had also sustained some injury, but not such as to disable him from advancing towards his prostrate adversary.

Lord Dunallan had fallen! He lay quiet and insensible on the ground, and for the moment that utter stillness and absence of the slightest sign of life made the principal bystanders believe that the vital spark had indeed departed. It is a terrible idea, to be a young, strong man, who but a moment before was instinct with life, thus cast on the cold earth, perhaps not only senseless, but dead on the soil on which he lay.

Even the practical Sir Charles, with his hardened accustomed familiarity with such scenes, appeared to shudder and shrink from the near contact that would decide the truth.

"Is he dead?" he asked, in as indifferent a tone as he could command; but either from emotion or his own slight wound, his voice trembled, and his limbs faltered as he came near to the recumbent form. The surgeon was kneeling by Lord Dunallan, and did not speak for a minute or two.

"If he's not dead he's close on it, in my opinion," he replied. "Your ball has gone too near home, Sir Charles; your aim was too true. You'd better be off at once, and leave Lord Fleming and me to see to the sufferer. Quick, if you'll be guided by me, and you'll easily escape."

Surely men must feel that they are idiots as well as sinners to plunge themselves in guilt and danger so needless from hot passion or vain and contemptible pique and pride. And the surgeon indulged in some such reflection as he hastily bound up the slight wound in the arm of the pale and daunted survivor, and then bent down once more to examine the senseless Egbert Dunallan.

"There's little to be done till we can get him moved," he said to Lord Fleming. "The wound is in the breast, and I fear has perforated the lungs, and that he is bleeding internally. If so, his life is not worth many days—perhaps not many hours' purchase. Let's get him removed; I have the appliances at hand."

Mr. Bradley was a retired army surgeon, who had served in some of the severest battles in the Crimea, and was now enjoying himself in the fair city of Florence for the remainder of his

days, and he displayed all the coolness and savoir faire that might be expected under the circumstances.

The vehicle he had, as a supposed trap for himself, was skilfully converted into a kind of ambulance, which would not shake the sufferer and endanger the greater flow of blood. And he and Lord Fleming managed to place the young nobleman on this litter without seemingly increasing his suffering, though a groan or two at intervals was rather hailed by the anxious watchers as a sign of life and sensation. Slowly and steadily Mr. Bradley guided his horse to the Hotel Nice, and summoned the horrified attendants to assist in conveying the wounded man to his room.

"He must have a proper nurse, and I will bring another surgeon," he said, "and then I think you, my lord, had better retire from the scene, for although they are not so severe here as in England, yet, being Englishmen, you may get into trouble if you are too conspicuous in the affair. It will be a fatal business, or I am much mistaken. I won't delay in sending the nurse."

And Mr. Bradley took his leave, an example quickly followed by Lord Fleming, who lost no time in proceeding to the hotel where he and Sir Charles were staying, and where he thought it probable he might find the unlucky principal in the fatal deed preparing to fly from the neighbourhood of the disaster without needless delay.

But though the arrangements for Lord Dunallan had occupied so little time, the "second" in the fatal affair found that his friend was already gone. Sir Charles had left a brief message for his servant to pack up and join him at a small town between Florence and Pisa as soon as possible, and not even a word or line for his friend to guide him as to his intention was vouchsafed by the man who had brought all the risk and trouble without any reward or reason.

"Humph! if that is the game I will soon show that I have the instinct of self preservation," thought Lord Fleming, with a scornful sneer. "And it's the last time I'll meddle in other men's quarrels, that's certain. Once bit, twice shy."

And the young man gave orders to depart, and paid his bill, and ere another hour was over his head was on his road to Paris, en route for he knew not where.

Poor Egbert Dunallan. He was left alone in his danger and suffering. No one near him that could care for his state. Even the woman he had won as his betrothed had played false to her vows. And the rank and wealth that might have seemed a passport to regard and friendship and love proved but as dead in the weight. No one loved him for himself alone.

Why was this? Was it that he had no power to win woman's love. Scarcely, when he has youth and talent and unusual force of character to carry the day. No, it was that he had in his turn been untrue to his better self.

He had wooed for ambition rather than love, and, as it was met, it was calculating vanity and ambition that had responded to the appeal. But still womanly pity and instinctive interest for the sick and the sorrowing did stand him in some stead. Leila Lorraine was one of the nurses appointed by the superior to tend his bed of suffering.

"The Sister Natalie will be in attendance," said the lady to her young subordinate, "but she is getting old, and it is not fair to leave her in sole charge of such a fatiguing case. And you," she added, "are too young and too inexperienced to be so trusted alone."

Leila had nothing to do but to submit. She did not even ask the name of the patient she was to attend. It was enough for her that he was suffering, and that it was her duty to alleviate the suffering and to deserve her livelihood by doing her duty. It was thus that she entered the sick-room with its gloomy surroundings.

Not a throb of the heart save what the encouragement of sickness and the presence of so needless and violent an injury to the human form

must bring to a young breast moved her simple robe's folds. But when her eyes fell on the pallid face that lay on the pillow it was perhaps all different.

He was one she knew well; one that brought back to her the painful past with vividness and humiliation. True, he had interposed between her and Digby Mayfield in a critical moment, and with a devotion and courtesy to herself that might deserve confidence. But then what had it been? Only a light and insulting admiration such as she would not deign to call love.

It was perhaps one of the penalties of her state, but it was one that should never be visited on her by an honourable mind. Such were the memories that brought a glow to her pale face, and a flash of painful pride to her eyes as she glanced on the patient committed to her care.

But it died away in a brief moment. The maiden had learned to give place to the nurse, the loving, highborn nursing to the bread-winning professional man. And in a few moments more she was quietly receiving instructions and arranging all the entourage of the sick-room as she had been taught to do in her professional training.

She took up her seat by the couch. She prepared for the night's watch with all the calmness of an attendant of the sick. But when the faint lips moved and a sound did come on the still atmosphere, she could not but bend down and listen eagerly to the meaning of the unconscious murmurings. And those words that repeated themselves more than once in his delirious wanderings of pain and weakness were "Leila, Leila, you would not have done such wrong."

CHAPTER XXIII.

She can teach you how to climb,
Higher than the spherule chine;
Or if victims feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

DAYS had lengthened into weeks, and still Leila's watch by the bedside of the wounded Egbert Dunallan was constant and prolonged. True, the surgeons had strengthened her by hopes of a recovery—true, the elderly sister who superintended and sanctioned her watch was full alike of interest and approval of this the first essay of the novice in so serious a case, but still Egbert's life hung on a thread, and Leila's womanly heart was touched by the suffering and the possible brief remainder of the life of one upon whom Nature and Fortune had lavished their best gifts.

It was sad to see the nobly-born and wealthy thus prostrate by the iron grasp of suffering and the grim shadowing of death. It was a stimulating and supporting motive for the young nurse to prove her power against such adversities, and to wrest as it were by her care and vigilance.

A conflict between the evil and the good, the enemy and the friend, the avenger and the mediator, was being waged, and for a long period it remained a doubtful result as to the contending powers.

But the angel guardian triumphed at length. Leila's care night and day warded off the dark genius that hovered over the bedside of the injured man; the mind gradually healed, and the inflamed symptoms yielded to her incessant vigilance, and the fever that attended them calmed and subsided under her soothing influence.

How could it be otherwise? How could one, even hovering on the brink of the grave, be insensible to the soft touch, the pleading tenderness of the clear voice, the pitying sympathy of those eyes so fraught with melting tenderness? Certainly not Egbert Dunallan, whose enfeebled and dulled senses were yet instinctively alive to the accents and the looks of one to whom he had been so powerfully attracted. A word from her was enough when anything that was necessary had to be performed or medicine swallowed by the patient.

"If you will—if you will!" came feebly and

faintly on the air, when each crisis was imminent.

And it was mainly by such influence that Leila was able to second so ably the doctors' orders, and still no direction was left unfulfilled either by want of obedience or of power. And Mr. Brady and his coadjutor Mr. Spence were loud in their delight and their approval of their subordinate.

"It's astonishing what a lovely young creature like her can do with a patient, where a crusty, withered, veteran nurse is altogether at fault," observed the latter.

"I've noticed it again and again, Brady, till I've almost taken a vow that I'll bargain for youth and good looks where a delicate case is in question and a nurse wanted. I think he'll pull through, thanks to that little saint-like attendant more than our two wrinkled selves," he added, joyously, for in truth Egbert's recovery was a great triumph for the Florentine Esculapius.

"Have you told her so?" asked his coadjutor, with a grim smile.

"No. It's as well not to forget that the angel may have some of the woman in her, and I've only given her enough hope to stimulate her till all is safe. Still I'm not afraid now," was the reply.

It was as if a spirit had returned from the dead, or a somnambulist awoke from the deep trance, when, four days after this cheering verdict, Lord Dunallan suddenly addressed his young nurse. Leila had in truth yielded for a brief space to the overpowering influence of the exhaustion she was suffering, and not aware that her patient's eyes were earnestly and fondly rivetted on her face.

Her closed eyes revealed the long, dark eyelashes more strikingly than usual, as they rested on a cheek pale with long watching, and her sweet lips were half parted so as to display a row of pearly teeth just between their coral redness, and the repose of slumber added to the youthful innocence of her sweet face. No wonder that the young nobleman lay still and quiet, resting on the fair vision on which he was feasting, as it were, his eager eyes, and that he was almost sorry when she at last woke up to consciousness and glanced at him with a guilty start, as if detected in a failure in her duty.

"Leila!" came on her ear, before she had satisfied herself that the patient had taken no harm, nor was in want of any attention—"Leila, I thought it was you. No one else could have cast such a spell over me, and held me in such bondage!"

The girl gave a half-saucy smile. Her spirits rose at the hopes which were fast deepening to certainty. It was such a joyful triumph to the novice—such a pleasure to the woman, for that young and noble sufferer to be saved from a sudden and a terrible fate.

"The nurse is queen, if the doctor is king of the sick-room," she said, playfully. "You will have to be in bondage at present, and the first proof is that you must not talk."

"Then I shall go into a fever with suppressed thoughts," he said, softly, and the feebleness of his strength gave an almost feminine sweetness to his voice and manner. "You must—as my nurse—save me from such danger."

"I will only allow one or two questions; what are they?" she said, holding up her fingers.

"Where is—Sir Charles Dunmow?"

"Quite safe, I believe, and far away."

"And—how came you here?"

"I am a nurse now. It is my profession. You must forget, please, that you ever knew me, even in my situation as 'companion.' I am, I hope, safe and unknown here."

"As if you ever could be forgotten," he said. "As if you could be forgotten where you have been once seen. Where is Heaven's justice that you should be in such a position?" he went on, raising his eyes to the skies as if to invoke some aid for the oppressed one.

"Hush, hush. I am content. No one else has a right to question my fate," she said, firmly. "Now be quiet and rest, or I will leave you."

"No, no! You must not, you shall not!" he said, so eagerly as to well-nigh threaten a feverish relapse. "Promise me that you will not. Promise that you will remain with me till I am well, or I shall soon relapse again, and not care to get better!"

It was a strong plea; but one that might have alarmed Leila's pride and delicacy had she not been persuaded that it was the wayward frenzy of a sick man, far away from those he knew and loved, and who now clung to a familiar face and voice.

"Be good then, and it shall be so," she said, coaxingly.

"You promise—fully—fairly?"

"Yes, I do."

"Then I will trust you," he said, wearily, and the next instant his eyes closed, and he was soon wrapped again in refreshing slumber.

Leila, in her innocence, watched him with soft and happy gratitude for the success of her care. She never doubted he would recover now, and she did not doubt either that it would be one more proof of her competence for the anxious duty she had ventured to undertake. Days again rolled away, from morn to eve, and

Whether weary or long
At length they came to even song,

and Egbert Dunallan was fast gaining strength, such as a young and unbroken constitution can quickly fetch up when once the crisis of illness has been successfully turned.

Perhaps he did not hasten the progress of his recovery—perhaps in truth he was really stronger and more independent than he chose to appear. But it was so sweet and luxurious to be on a couch and listen to Leila's soft voice as she read; or to receive his medicine and food from her hands, and feel her soft fingers arranging the bandage, of which he was not yet wholly independent, that there was but little wonder if the young man lengthened on that delicious dependence on his lovely nurse to the utmost stretch of possibility or patience. But at length the day arrived when this life must come to an end.

The doctors were too clear-sighted not to pronounce him convalescent, and the sisterhood too much in need of help to allow an efficient member of their body to be detained by a patient well enough to be left in ordinary charge. Leila was to leave her post in a day or two, it was at last decided, and Egbert Dunallan seemed unusually silent and thoughtful at the approaching parting, albeit he should have hailed it as a proof of his entire convalescence.

"Read to me—sing to me—talk to me. It will be so soon over," he said, sadly, on that last day he pleaded. "To-morrow I shall be longing for such happiness in vain!"

The girl did not or would not comprehend his full meaning. She quickly assented with a composed mien, that might perhaps have destroyed his hopes more than the most repulsive refusal, and began to read some of his favourite novels with their spirit-stirring strain and glowing language.

Then she took a guitar that lay on the floor by her, and began some of the simple airs that are best suited to that instrument, and to which her rich voice and plaintive expression gave a new charm.

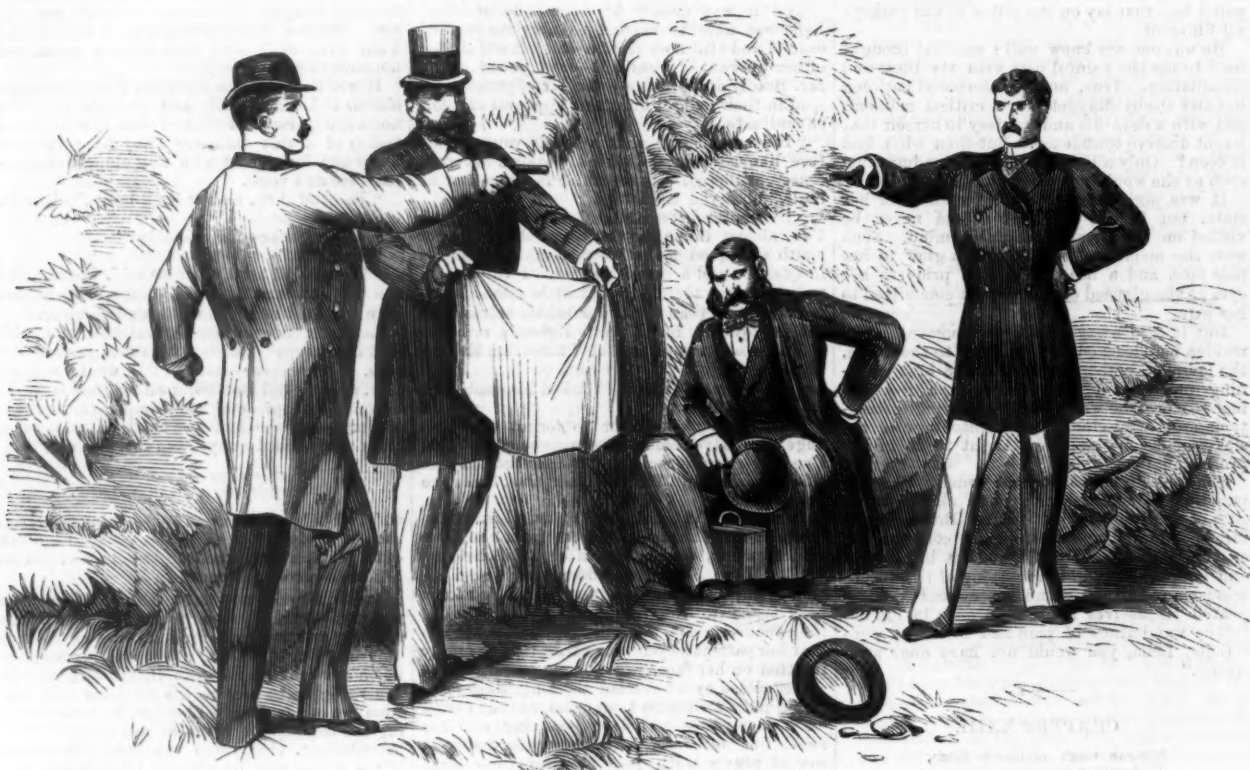
Then she laid down the instrument and retired somewhat from the near neighbourhood of her patient to recline herself quietly in a lounging chair at some little distance, where she occupied herself with some work she had brought to occupy her leisure. There was silence for a few minutes, then he said:

"You have not fulfilled all my requests, sweet Leila."

"Indeed; what is it? Do you wish another song? I suppose you must be indulged, as it is my last day here."

"No," he said. "No, not that. It is more than that I want. I want you to talk to me," he replied, earnestly.

"That is the most difficult of all. More especially as I have nothing especial to say," she



[SATISFACTION.]

answered. "There are so few subjects in common between us."

"There is one that I wish, I long, I pant to be in common between us," he said quickly, "and that is love!"

She was silent, though a flush that was more of vexation than agitation dyed her cheeks, but at last she said, coldly, when his fervent eyes spoke but too plainly the passionate earnestness of his meaning:

"Lord Dunallan, please not to talk such folly if you mean me to remain even the short time that will elapse before my departure."

"Why, dearest Leila, why should you be so severe?" he said, softly. "What folly can there be in my loving you? Why should you not listen and return it when you are so lonely and helpless in the world. You were not born to labour for your living and be exposed to all the hardships and the insults that will be your fate if you remain in your present position. Dear, sweet, lovely one, be mine—my care, my love—and you shall never know any grief or danger more."

The girl listened in actual and petrified surprise that did not for the time take in the real and full meaning of the words. Could it be that this wealthy and high-born man intended to lay his hand and coronet at the disposal of a nameless foundling; one whom he had only known as the companion of a foreign invalid, and the humble, trained nurse of a foreign sisterhood?

It was to a certain extent flattering, dazzling to a desolate, lonely girl not yet twenty years old. But Leila felt no flutter of answering emotion in her heart that could have induced her to listen to the suit with readiness or safety. She was not conscious of any such feeling as she had cherished in her early girlhood for Digby Mayfield, nor such as she knew would soon have been excited by Geoffrey Sabine. All this rushed over her young brain like a sweeping tide ere she could find voice or courage to give the reply which Lord Dunallan's looks as much as his words demanded.

"You cannot be serious, my lord. It is only because you are ill—because I have been of some use to you," she said, with as much composure as she could command. "Please say no more; I cannot listen to it."

"But you must—indeed you must," he broke in, eagerly, as the hesitation of her manner increased his courage. "Leila, it is impossible that you are cold and insensible to such love as mine. You need a protector; a friend; a lover; you shall find a devoted one in me," he added, trying to take her hand.

But she snatched it back, and there came a startled look in her eyes as she looked at him as if to demand his real meaning.

"I do not quite comprehend," she said, proudly; "but if as I must suppose, you are anxious to make me your wife, Lord Dunallan, it is out of the question. I am not your equal. I do not even know what was my real birth, and I will never be despised, nor cause another to be despised on my account. It is impossible."

Lord Dunallan looked somewhat confused in his turn, and there was a mingling of shame and amusement in his expression and feelings at the answer.

"Why, yes—perhaps—that is—of course, you would be just the same," he said—"the same as a wife, and, indeed, a great deal more cared for and loved than most wives. But still, as you say, it would scarcely do to think of that at any rate, for the present. Perhaps after a time, then I might venture. Anyway, it would be the same for you, Leila. I would surround you with luxury and happiness; I would watch over you and worship you, adore you," he went on, vehemently, his impetuous passion increasing as he went on and saw the changing emotions in her lovely face that increased a thousand fold its charm.

Leila stood erect as he went on, as if spell-bound, as if she determined to be certain that she did not mistake—that the hideous idea which presented itself was not an injustice on her part. But when he had finished, when he

tried once more to possess himself of her hand, and drew her towards him with winning caresses, then her full resentment and indignation at the outrage blazed forth in her eyes and literally choked her voice as she replied:

"I could not have believed this. It is too cruel, too base, that you should take advantage of my position, which should have been sacred in your eyes, to insult me. I, who am here as your nurse to save your life, and you would ruin mine! Lord Dunallan, it is infamous. Surely you will repent it some day. You have given fresh pain to one sadly over-tried. May Heaven forgive you!"

And she walked hastily to the door, and left the apartment without another word or look. Egbert was taken by surprise. He had expected hesitation, doubts, difficulties, perhaps a refusal, but not this mingled, lofty dignity and touching sadness as his reply.

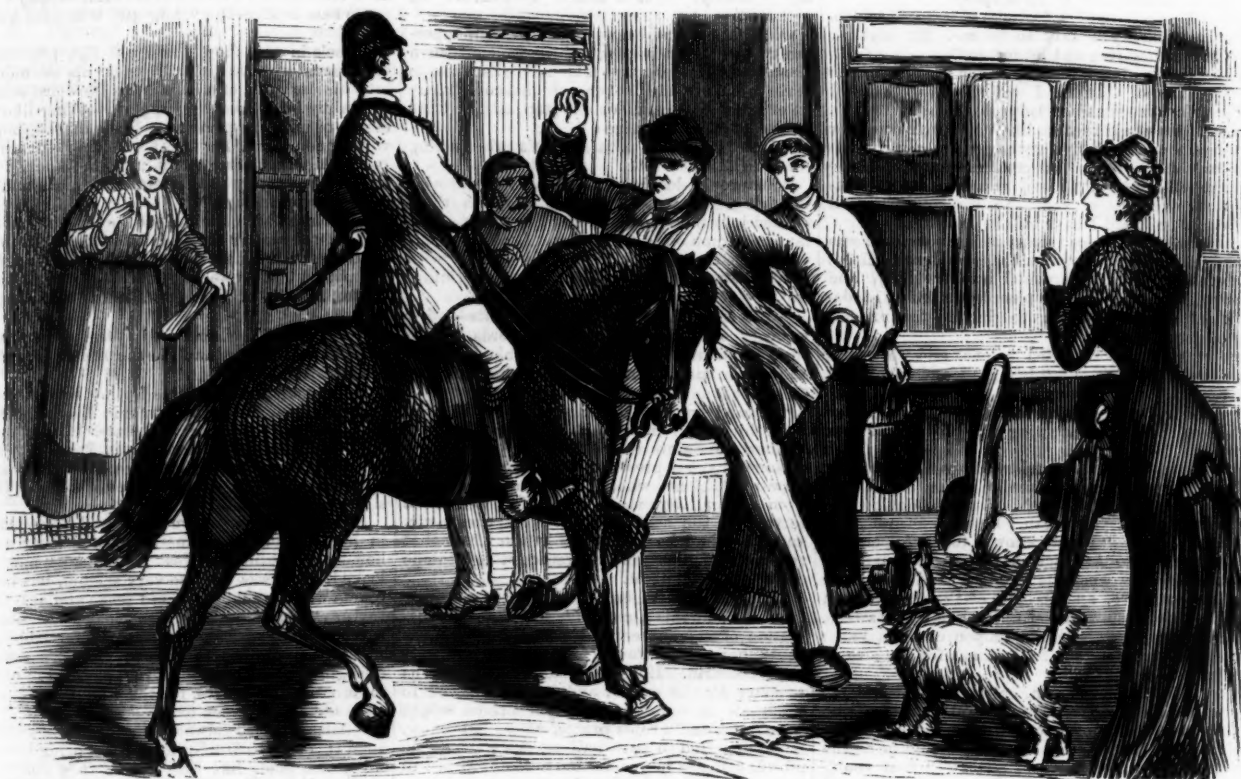
"Leila, Leila!" he exclaimed, "stay, stay! Only listen to me. Do not leave me in anger."

But she either did not hear or did not heed his prayer, and he was left alone in his remorse and his disappointment. Remorse and disappointment, but not resentment or hate. Egbert Dunallan was not altogether depraved in his ideas and feelings, and his better judgment and nobler views of woman's character spoke irresistibly in his own condemnation and Leila's praise.

"She is a rare creature," he mused. "If she were but well-born and penniless, or even if she had a name and kindred, I might make an idiot of myself and marry her, perhaps only to repent afterwards, when some coarse, low-born parents suddenly started up to claim Lady Dunallan as their daughter. And yet—and yet she has taught me a lesson I never yet learnt—that I can love, and that women are not all mercenary nor weak."

And Lord Dunallan felt in his ruined heart that the insight thus gained into his own nature would not soon be forgotten.

(To be Continued.)



[DERMOT'S THREAT.]

AILEEN'S LOVE STORY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Christine's Revenge; or, O'Hara's Wife,"

"The Mystery of His Love," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XI.

ELI MALONE.

I would have staked my very life upon
Thine honesty; but thou art false.
Speak! say, what art thou?

Now the pawnshop was in a mean, crooked, narrow street of the little Irish town. It was a dark, dingy, depressing-looking establishment; the gloom of poverty hung over it like a storm cloud. Its doorstep was constantly thronged by forlorn-looking men, and miserable, haggard women; some with despair looking out of their hollow eyes, many with wailing infants at their breasts, and toddling, half-naked little ones clinging to their soiled, bedraggled skirts.

Inside hung coats and hats and shabby finery of various descriptions, many faded shawls, and a few antiquated silk dresses. These were presents made by certain ladies to their maids, which had found their way to the shop of Eli Malone. But he was pretty well acquainted with the names and residences of those young women, also with the names of their employers, and he had never entertained the least suspicion of their honesty.

As for Aileen, with her beauty, her frankness, the known difficulties, but honest respectability of her adopted family, it was quite preposterous that the thought should have struck him that this young girl had not come quite honestly by the resplendent emerald, but the thought did strike him, nevertheless, as he turned the ring round and round on his dirty finger and examined the pure water of the beautiful stone,

the pure gold of the setting, and the exquisite make and finish of the costly bauble.

All the while poor Aileen was anxiously waiting to hear what price Eli Malone thought of offering her, and whether it would be enough to pay off the bailiff's men before they began to clear out the household goods of the distressed family, to take the very beds from under the sick young mother and her babes.

Aileen was very impatient for Eli to decide and make up his mind exactly what he meant to give her, but Eli Malone did not seem to be in the least hurry. It was a dark day, and the ugly shop, with its unswept floor, its quantities of shabby wearing apparel hanging on hooks and pegs, like a weird assemblage of unpicturesque ghosts, was a dark place, so that perhaps Eli may really have had some slight difficulty in convincing himself as to the exact value of the emerald.

While he held it up between his spectacled eyes and the light, Aileen, with that intense admiration for the beautiful, and that keen appreciation for the grotesque, which belongs to all artistic natures, began to contrast the quaint ugliness of old Eli and his uncouth surroundings with the elegant, nonchalant grace of that insolent young nobleman, Lord Athlone, in his gold embroidered dressing-gown; the cabinets of priceless treasures, the china, pictures, velvet couches, all illumined by the soft radiance of silver lamps, and he with his delicate, proud face and blonde complexion and air of careless insolence looking at her out of his half-closed eyes.

"What a different being he is to old Eli," she said to herself. "One could hardly think they were fellow creatures."

Certainly Eli Malone was ugly. He was short and crooked, with very short legs, and an enormous head covered with a thick thatch of grey, unkempt hair. His great shaggy eyebrows met over his hooked nose; his chin nearly met this hooked nose; his complexion was the colour of an orange. He wore a dreadful old dusty brown coat, and a long waistcoat

that had once been blue, and now was the same colour as the dirty floor of his shop.

Old Eli was a bachelor, and report said truly that he had saved a few thousands of pounds. He was a miser, and lived in a mean, dirty fashion, denying himself comforts and even necessities in his declining years that he might sacrifice to his idol greed and add pound after pound to his hoard.

Aileen knew all this, for in very small towns the private history of nearly all public characters is well-known for ten miles round, and the old pawnbroker was quite a public character in his way. Eli wheeled round suddenly and looked at Aileen with the keenest suspicion through his spectacles.

"How did you come by this stone?" he asked, sharply.

Aileen's lovely face flushed and then grew pale. She must conceal the fact of her having gone to Athlone Castle on every account. First of all she would not for the whole world compromise her friends, and secondly, those friends, some of them at any rate, would put a cruel construction on the fact of her interest in Mr. Edward Athlone.

"I don't think, sir, you have any right to ask that question," she began.

"I will show you that I have," the miser interrupted, with a show of his long ugly fangs. "I happen to know that this ring belongs to her ladyship, the Countess of Clondell I had to repair it once about a year ago, and I recognise my own work. You will have to go before the magistrate to account for this."

"Mr. Malone, for the love of heaven!" began Aileen, "don't think to put a disgrace on me like that."

The hard, cruel old man only grinned as if he rather enjoyed the anguish of the terrified Aileen.

"I've got myself in throuble," he said, "doing this sort of thing before now, and I'm not intending to do it again. I don't know how you came by this. Mayhap you've a swateheart who is a footman at the castle, and he's given

it you, but then it's myself must find out how he come to have it in his keeping."

"A sweetheart! a footman!" echoed Aileen. "How dare you talk so to me, Mr. Malone. Give me my ring and let me go!"

"Indade, but it's not give you the ring of the Countess of Clondell I will at all, at all, until I make sure that her ladyship gave it to you, and how would that be likely? You're not her maid; you don't live at the castle; you are the daughter, or the adopted daughter, of the Darrell folks. I know you are all as poor as rats, everyone of you. No, my colleen, you'll stay here until I have this looked into."

The old creature turned as he spoke, and was about to lay his hand on the shoulder of Aileen, when a young man rushed into the shop, and springing to her side, placed himself in a defiant attitude between the girl and the hideous old pawnbroker.

"Oh, Dermot," cried Aileen, and the tears sprang to her eyes. "It's glad and thankful I am to see you, acushla; here's Eli Malone making out that I am a thief, because I have brought him that ring to pledge for our needs."

Dermot, haggard and wild eyed, turned in amaze towards the crooked old man.

"What ring? Who? What? I don't know what any of you mean," he said, in a hoarse, weak voice. "I only know I found Aileen had driven off to Athlone in Callaghan's cart, and nobody knew what she was after, and I mounted the carthorse, and in spite of them all, rode in here after you, and met Callaghan in the street, and he told me he had seen you come on here; and now what is it? Tell me, for the love of heaven above us!"

"That young person," responded old Malone, who was one of those unnatural monsters who are not more moved to pity by the sight of a lovely girl in distress than they would be by the breaking of a pane of glass—"that young person comes here and offers me an emerald ring worth more than fifty pounds, set in the most costly fashion; and I know the ring, since I had it to repair about twelve months ago, and it's the property of her ladyship the Countess of Clondell, and what I say I mean, and I say she hasn't come by this jewel honestly, and she shall go before the magistrate and give an account, or my name is not Eli Malone!"

Dermot clenched and doubled his fists.

"You old idiot!" he began. Then looking with a supreme scorn at the withered, miserable, weak old man, he added, with contempt: "Sure and you're not worth knocking down, or it's myself would do that same and roll ye up in a nate parcel and send ye through the post with your name and address writ large: 'Old Malone, the lunatic, Glengarron Lunatic Asylum,' and sure and they'd deliver you all right if I paid the postage—a couple of penny stamps or so, for it's yourself don't weigh many ounces, Malone; but now if you have any senses left just try and collect them, and tell me what you do mane at all, at all?"

"I mane just what I've said. Here is the ring, and it's worth fifty pounds, and it belongs to Lady Clondell. And how did your sister, or whatever she is, get possession of it?"

Dermot turned his clear blue eyes in inquiring wonder on Aileen. To his horror she became very pale. She could not meet his gaze. She looked on the ground, and tears filled her eyes.

"Don't ask me, Dermot, not now at least. It was honestly come by. Ask the countess, Mr. Malone," turning to the pawnbroker. "She wouldn't say that the ring was hers."

"It's that same I'll do!" cried Mr. Malone. "I'll go up myself to the castle. I'll hire a car, and when the countess sees her ring she'll be so glad that she will pay my fare; and meanwhile this young person, and you too, who are her accomplice, must come at once to the station-house."

"I shall have to roll you up first, Mr. Malone again, and send you through the post in the way I said," replied Dermot, with a grim smile. "Aileen, is that ring yours?"

"Yes," she answered, looking him in the eyes,

but soon looking on the floor again, and blushing painfully. "It is mine. I—I earned it, Dermot."

Old Eli, who had been watching for an opportunity, now took advantage of the moment when Dermot was looking into his beloved's eyes, to make a dash to the doorway of his shop. There he established himself on the step, and he cried at the pitch of his voice:

"Here, come, it's a thief that's taken a ring—a thief!"

A few rough-looking men came forward with inquiring glances, but at that moment these dashed into the mean and crooked street a gallant horseman on a gallant steed, a very noble young gentleman in mien and bearing, with dark, crisp, curling hair, and velvet riding-cap.

A few men removed their ragged hats—a few women spoke some loud, flattering words, hoping they would reach his ear, tickle his self-love, and induce him to fling some silver pieces where they stood.

"Arrah! but he's a beautiful boy, Heaven bless him! the image of the countess, his mother, the Saints defend her!"

None of those present would have recognised Edward Athlone, who had been away so long from Ireland, but that he was followed by a servant in the handsome livery of the castle, and they had heard reports to the effect that the earl's younger son had returned to Athlone on the previous night.

Now Edward Athlone was as poor a young gentleman at this time, so far as the actual possession of current coin of the realm went, as could have been found within the sea girt shores of Erin. He really had no half-crowns to spare for the crowd, and he only bowed to them all as some young royal prince might have done, and a royal prince, as we all know, is not expected to cast half-crowns among the crowd, who are in general too much absorbed in their admiration for royalty to care so very much for half-crowns.

But an assemblage of scantily clad Irish folks in a remote Irish town is almost sure to be in these hard times suffering under such a pressure of want and anxiety, that the sight of a gallant, bowing, aristocratic horseman would naturally raise hopes of liberality in their souls. And poor, handsome, generous Edward knew this quite well, and wished with all his soul that he possessed a heavy purse of gold to fling among these suffering ones right and left.

He was thinking of something else at this minute though, for he caught sight of hideous old Eli at the dingy door of the pawnshop, and he drew rein and called to him in a loud, authoritative voice.

"What are you making that noise about? Who has robbed you?"

Old Eli looked up through his spectacles at the handsome horseman. The next moment he had recognised the Clondell livery. He pulled off his greasy skull cap and made a low obeisance.

"Welcome back to Ireland, my lord," he said.

"I am not my lord, Mr. Malone," replied Edward, "and I think you must know that, for Lord Athlone is often among you here in Galway. I am his brother, though, and I want to know who has robbed you?"

"Not me, your honour; not me, Mr. Athlone, but it's your lady mother, your honour. See this ring, a most splendid emerald, which her ladyship's maid brought here to me to repair for her ladyship about two years ago, and I knew it again, when a couple of impertinent young people had the cheek to bring it into my poor place as bold as brass, your honour, and ask me for the sum of fifty pounds for it. See it, your honour; you will know the ring again the moment you set eyes on it."

A murmur that was almost a howl arose from the little crowd of miserable women who had gathered round the honourable Edward Athlone and the pawnbroker. As for Edward, his dusky pallor was overspread by a deep crimson flush as he took the ring and placed it on his finger, then he looked up suddenly with his piercing

black eyes, which almost seemed as if they could have read old Eli's soul, and he said, fiercely:

"Where is she—the young girl who gave you this?"

"She's in the shop," said old Eli, pointing backwards with his thumb over his shoulder into his dark den of a shop, with its weird suits of shabby left-off wearing apparel looking like a crowd of unhappy ghosts. "She's in the shop, your honour, and her brother. They couldn't have made their escape out into the back, for the wall round my yard is nine feet high, and I keep two fierce dogs."

The old miser chuckled as he spoke, but a look passed among some of the half-clad people—a look full of significance, and which might not portend safety to him and his hoards in the future, in spite of his high walls and his savage dogs.

"Come out!" he screeched at the pitch of his voice. "Come here and see the son of the lady you've robbed!"

In a moment Aileen came forth. She was not pale; a colour like a rose burnt in either cheek; her glorious eyes shone like stars. For a moment the brilliance of her beauty, seen now by daylight, took away the judgment of Edward Athlone. He was perfectly bewildered by the sight of such loveliness.

She was attired, as we have said elsewhere, in her Sunday costume—alas! how poor and homely a costume. Neat and almost new it looked, for it was worn so very seldom, but how coarse was the plum-coloured serge and also the texture of the scarlet cloth cloak; the black straw bonnet, with its cherry-coloured ribbons, was a perfect thing in its way. Aileen's sweet face glowed within it like a rose encased in dark moss or autumn leaves, for the bonnet was lined with some dark green thin silk.

"Aileen," cried Edward Athlone, "you should send this ring to Dublin to sell, not bring it to a miserable place like this, where they don't in the least know the value of it." Then holding it towards her, he said: "My mother, the countess, gave that ring to Aileen last night."

Edward knew full well how the world, even such a pitiful little world as had been looking out for his half-crowns, these half-clad people with the wretched old pawnbroker at their head, would misjudge him and Aileen also if he owned that he had given her the ring. But even as it was, looks, sinister, scornful and significant passed between the crowd, and then there rushed out Dermot, white as death, with teeth clenched and eyes blazing.

Aileen looked at him, and she saw that her frantic lover was ready for anything short of murder; ready to tear Athlone from his horse and trample him under his feet in the snow-whitened street.

"Dermot," she said, softly. "Dermot, don't be impatient. You can't understand. I will explain anon."

But could it be possible? Had her ears deceived her, or had Dermot uttered an oath? He would not look at her; his blazing blue eyes were fixed on Edward Athlone as he sat looking upright and fearless and noble, Aileen thought, on his grand grey horse, and she could not help contrasting his elegant appointments and sombre, rich riding dress with the rough, ragged working clothes and slouching gait of poor Dermot, whose fine athletic frame was bent by physical toil, and whose handsome face was haggard through care and hunger. The young gentleman looked calmly at the rage-whitened face of Dermot Darrell; and then Dermot spoke.

CHAPTER XII.

DERMOT'S JEALOUSY.

Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow,
Thou shalt not escape calumny.
SHAKESPEARE.

"I WILL have the truth out of you, Edward Athlone, if it costs me my life!"

"The truth?" Edward said. "Well, Dermot

Darrell, and so you shall, and it need not cost you your life either."

"Ah, you think I am a poor reptile, don't you, Mr. Athlone? A reptile to crush under your heels when it suits your good pleasure. But you'll find that sometimes a reptile can sting to the death!"

"Dermot," said Edward, speaking with a sweet gravity that Aileen thought adorable. "Dermot, let us two speak to each other like two men. Let us leave the idea of reptiles alone. We have nothing to do with them, I am sure. You are a brave fellow, and no reptile. Neither am I a reptile. I am as honest a man as you are, Dermot. Don't doubt me."

But Dermot was possessed by a very demon of jealousy. He sneered bitterly, as he said:

"I don't believe in the honesty of the robbers of the soil; those who hold the land which should be ours, and grind the faces of the poor. You are an Athlone. At this moment your father's hirelings are in my mother's home, stripping it, and laying it bare, because we can't wring corn enough out of the poor soil to live and pay the rent he chooses to charge. You are far worse than any reptile!"

The colour deepened on Edward's dark cheek, but he smiled nevertheless, a bright, glancing smile, and his white teeth gleamed, and his dark eyes shone, as he said:

"I think that no reptile can be more cruel than those who do such deeds; but I am not an upholder of those cruel evictions and seizures for rent. I detest such crimes, and I came on here from your farm of Kilallen, where I had ridden down when I heard that a distress was put in the house. I was told that Aileen had gone to Athenry in the cart of Callaghan, and I at once guessed that she had gone to try and sell this ring so as to pay the bailiffs out. I knew that her possession of such a ring would create surprise and perhaps suspicion; but I certainly never thought that you, Mr. Malone, would insult a respectable girl, whose friends have been known in the country for generations, by supposing that she had become possessed of a jewel unfairly," and he looked at Eli Malone very severely.

As he spoke, Eli crouched like a whipped cur, and began to mutter some excuses, and then Athlone looked at Dermot.

"I will explain to you how Aileen became possessed of that ring, if you care to know?" he said.

Dermot's fair face was now completely disfigured by the evil temper that possessed him like a fiend. His light eyebrows met in a knot, his eyes were half lost in their sockets. He stared at Edward Athlone as if he would have liked to stab him to the heart. He did not believe one word that he spoke. He only regarded him as a shameless and infamous reprobate, who was anxious to hunt down such game as a beautiful country girl like Aileen, reckless if he led her to ruin or to death. The story of Aileen's mother was in the mind of Dermot. It seemed to him now that all women were vain, false, and frail.

Already he had condemned Aileen in his heart. His was a fearfully obstinate soul. If he once took an idea into his head, this blue-eyed Irish farmer, nothing would take it out again.

Only one resolve was in his heart now—to prove the wickedness of this hateful Athlone and the frailty of Aileen, and then to take the life of Athlone, and to leave Aileen to battle the world for herself, while he fled to Canada, or to the other side of the world, led a wild, savage life, and ended it as abruptly as possible. It was a short, grim programme that he sketched out in his mind.

"I should like to know, but I would not believe one of your words if you began to tell lies this moment, and lied until to-morrow night. I don't ask a question, because I know I should only hear lies. But this I say," and Dermot clenched his fist, and shook it at Edward Athlone, "I won't rest day nor night until I have found out the truth of this, and when I have found it out, then, Athlone look to yourself—look to yourself!"

And then Dermot turned aside and began to walk rapidly up the steep, narrow street. Aileen looked wistfully after him, but she knew enough of her foster brother's temper to be aware that to follow him and attempt to reason with him in his present mood would be worse than useless.

"I must think of those at home," she said, bravely. "And now, Mr. Malone, you have heard Mr. Edward Athlone say that the ring belongs to me, and you must know that I am in a hurry to get the money that I may return to Kilist and pay the bailiffs out of the house at Kilallen. How much will you advance me on that ring?"

"Money is scarce now—very scarce," replied the old miser, in a croaking tone.

And he rubbed his very dirty hands together and looked on the ground. How Edward Athlone cursed his poverty in his heart of hearts, when he looked on that mean and loathsome old miser, and owned to himself that the creature possessed more than enough money probably than would buy Kilallen Farm out and out, and make the Darrell family at once contented and happy, if he felt so disposed, while Edward Athlone could do nothing for them just then but urge this miserable pawnbroker to pay up quickly for the emerald.

"Do you mean to buy the ring, Malone?" Edward asked, in his pleasant, courtly fashion. He had far too much command over himself to allow this greedy, dirty individual to fancy that he was anxious for Aileen to get the money.

"I really don't want it, my lord; and it's as good as buying it, for of course the poor colleen will never be able to redeem it," old Eli answered with a cunning smile. "But of course since your honour seems to take an interest in the poor child—"

"Yes, a deep interest," Edward answered. "My mother also feels the same."

"Well, I couldn't say more than forty pounds," croaked old Eli.

"That will do," Aileen said quickly. "It will pay the bailiffs out. Mr. Malone, make haste, for pity's sake, for indeed I'm wild to get back to the farm!"

Old Eli went in among the grove of hanging coats and dresses, cloaks and trousers, that looked so like an assemblage of grotesque, unearthly people without heads or hands. He went into the filthy den called "parlour" at the back of his shop, and he drew a key from his waistcoat pocket and unlocked an iron safe, deep sunk in the wall.

The door flew open, and the miser uttered a little joyous chuckle at the sight of his dearly beloved hoard. There were bags piled one upon another; there were two strong boxes of dark-stained wood. Each of these were fastened by a padlock. Old Eli put his ugly head into the safe, and counted the bags with his spectacled eyes.

"One, two, three, four, five, six, seven," he said; "that big one is full of half sovereigns, two thousand of 'em, and those three have each two hundred sovereigns in gold; these two have only seventy pounds a piece in silver and gold, and this one has just forty pounds in silver alone. I will give the girl this one. Why should I part with my gold? I love my gold, and I won't part with it. No banks for me, banks which break and the bankers run away beyond the seas and snap their fingers at the losers; no banks for me."

The old wretch chuckled as he took down the bag, then he locked the door of the safe, put the key very stealthily into his pocket, and crept out again to the street where quite a motley crowd had now collected about the doorstep.

"See here," he said; "it's heavy, but it's all I've got. I've no gold, not so much as half a sovereign; times is so bad and money is so scarce. It's heavy; I don't know if you can lift it quite."

The bag which contained forty pounds sterling in the shape of crowns and half-crowns, shillings and florins, was certainly very heavy to lift, but Edward Athlone put it on the saddle before him.

"You can trust me with it, Aileen," he said. "I will ride by the side of the market cart of your friend if you can find him. But, Malone, that ring is worth fifty pounds; you said so yourself, so you must make out a ticket in due form, so that the ring may be redeemed at any moment."

Old Eli, who knew that he could have sold the gem in Dublin for quite sixty pounds to a dealer in precious stones, made a wry face and wished that he could strangle Edward Athlone, but this creature was a great coward, and therefore he hastened into the shop, made out the ticket, then came and put it into Aileen's hands, and by this time rumours of the strange scene that was being enacted outside the shop of the old pawnbroker had reached the ears of Callaghan, in whose market-cart Aileen had come to Athenry.

That good-natured personage now arrived on the spot. He bowed deeply to Edward Athlone and told Aileen that he was quite ready to drive her back to Kilallen, since he had finished the business which had brought him to Athenry.

"Then you can take this bag of silver," said Edward, putting the dirty canvas bag into the market cart, "but I mean to ride along with you and see the money paid and the bailiffs cleared out of the house."

Aileen did not oppose this. There was a certain feeling of peace and security which the presence of Edward Athlone gave her, and she felt elated and proud of his championship, poor child, which was childish of her, no doubt, for in reality none of her plain, humble friends would think any the better of her for having excited the admiration and won the friendship of the earl's younger son.

All the young men of the district were accustomed to denounce the earl's sons and their London masculine visitors as shameless dare-devils, from whom nothing but evil was to be looked for, but Aileen had already enshrined this handsome, "Honourable Edward" as a hero in the sanctuary of her pure, warm heart, and it would take more than all the combined logic and eloquence of the county of Galway to convince her that he was other than a hero, and a very noble one.

The market-cart dashed on through the narrow streets of Athenry, and soon it was rolling along the snowy mountain roads that led to the village of Kilist. On either side were mountains, and far as the eye could see chain after chain stretched out in all directions and bounded the dark horizon. The sky was lead-coloured, and the north wind howled; the face of the country was bare, rugged, wild, picturesque, but barren and bleak under the December heaven. Here and there a whitewashed house, an assemblage of outbuildings, and about a dozen miserable hovels gave evidence that human beings lived and suffered and toiled amid these solitudes.

Soon they came in sight of a gentleman's house lying back amid a plantation of fir trees. Edward Athlone, who was riding close by the side of Aileen, pointed to the house and said, "That's 'Dolgelly.'" He said no more. Aileen looked up with a slight passing interest in the very handsome square, white house.

She knew that it was one of the mansions belonging to the great family which ruled that portion of the county; she forgot that Lord Athlone claimed it as his own "shooting box," and retired thither at times with some of the fastest of his fast friends, there to hold unholy orgies. Had she but known that the depraved and selfish heir to the earldom had destined that lonely country house as her prison, she would have shrank and shuddered. As it was she thought only of the bailiffs in the farm of Kilist, and of Edward Athlone who rode by her side.

The work of spoilation had begun. Callender stood upright in the midst of the clay-floored kitchen taking an inventory and checking off the various articles which the bailiffs were removing into the yard, where carts were ready to receive the tables, chairs, dressers, clock, and

kitchen utensils; the dresser and the wooden chest in one corner which contained the hoards of linen which all good old-fashioned housewives love to accumulate.

Mrs. Darrell stood near the fireplace with a dreadful expression on her white face. She shed no tears; her hands were tightly clasped; her eyes were fixed on the pallid, cold face of Callender, whom she had cursed the day before. All at once Athlone strode into the room holding in his hands the heavy canvas bag.

"Stop!" he thundered; "this is an infamous deed, Mr. Callender; you should have refused to do this dirty, cruel, dastardly work; you would have refused if you had been a man!"

"Arrah, then the poor thing is not much more than a dummy set up to frighten the crows after all!" cried Barney Sullivan, who sat astride upon the clothes chest smoking a pipe. "Sure, you never did think he was a real livin' man, did ye, Mr. Athlone, your honour."

Edward was too absorbed to pay any heed to the talk of the pedlar. He flung down the bag of silver at Callender's feet.

"Count it," he said. "I understand that forty pounds will pay you out of the house. Count it, then bring all the goods back that you have removed, and clear out of this house!"

A murmur of applause, followed by a chorus of hip hurrahs, followed this speech. Edward became for a moment a hero in the eyes of these emotional people. Even Mrs. Darrell began to weep and to pray the saints to bless him. Callender, who was in general a man of very few words, and who thoroughly appreciated the old saying, "Least said soonest mended," counted the money in discreet silence, took it out to his trap, and then ordered the men to replace the things they had removed, and in the same order in which they had found them.

All was the work of a few moments. Soon the sheets and towels and pillow-cases were replaced in the chest; the chairs and tables were carried in again, and then, since the cattle and farm implements had already been removed, there was nothing else to do. Mr. Callender and his bailiffs cleared off, as did the mounted police, but Edward Athlone's servant remained outside in the yard taking care of the horses, and Edward Athlone himself remained in the clay-floored kitchen.

Aileen had crept in. She had been upstairs with Mary and the children while all the fuss was going on. She had taken off her bonnet and cloak, and now she came and sat down by the side of her adopted mother. All the neighbours had withdrawn except Barney Sullivan. Michael stood with folded arms and downcast eyes near the window. Edward Athlone had seated himself on one of the wooden chairs, and was speaking some earnest words to the distressed family.

"I don't want to preach to you," he was saying; "I know the land is barren and the landlord is cruel, but if you are wise, Michael Darrell, you will carry your manhood and your energy to a more congenial soil; you will emigrate. I will help you—you and your wife and your brother; your mother and sister might do worse than accompany you; your sister must go if your mother does."

Oh, how the heart of Aileen sank at those words.

"He does not care one atom for me," she said. "And why should he—oh, why should he? But it would be fearful to leave this country and lose sight of him for ever and ever. I should only see him then in my dreams, and the waking would be so desolate."

"Think over what I have said, Michael Darrell," said Edward, rising to his feet. "I must go now; I will not forget you."

Then he shook hands all round, with Aileen the last, and hurried out to his horse. That night was destined to be one of the most momentous in his existence, while for Aileen Moore it was to be fraught with the cruellest trials, leading to the deadliest peril that can befall poor humanity.

The family sat down to a cup of tea and a few cakes in humble thankfulness. Just as they had commenced their meal, Dermot

Darrell rushed into the room looking like a madman, and with an absolutely fiendish expression on his face. Aileen and his mother saw that he had been drinking, and for some reason unknown to themselves they both shuddered fearfully.

(To be Continued.)

ROB ROY MACGREGOR;

OR,

THE HIGHLAND CHIEFTAIN.

A ROMANCE OF SCOTLAND.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Amy Robsart," "Breaking the Charm," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXII.

It is matter of history how Prince James was betrayed by some, deserted by others, and finally obliged to fly for his life, leaving his friends to suffer the penalty of their treasonable acts, and we have simply to chronicle the fact of his ill success. Rob Roy fought with the usual courage of a Macgregor. When the cause was acknowledged to be lost on all hands he retreated to his rocky stronghold, where he defied the soldiers to come and take him. Warned by experience they let him alone; and in the disturbed state of the country he found safety.

Sir Hildebrand Osbaldistone and his sons all fell in battle under the Earl of Derwentwater, for he fought to the last, refusing, with the dogged courage of their race, to fly or accept quarter. It was found that Sir Hildebrand had actually made a will, in which he cut Rashleigh off with a shilling on account of his treachery, and that he left his property to Frank in the event of his other sons dying.

Then Frank became the possessor of Osbaldistone Hall, which was a place he loved on account of the happy memories associated with it. Here it was that he first met the lovely Diana Vernon, and every room in the house spoke to her of him. Every walk in the garden, every tree, each shrub, seemed to remind him of her. When peace was re-established, Frank made a journey to the north with Andrew to take possession of his property, for he felt he would experience a melancholy satisfaction in visiting the old place once more. On arriving at the Hall they were met by Turner, the butler, who seemed considerably surprised to see them.

"Is it you, Master Frank?" he exclaimed. "Welcome to the Hall. I did not expect you so soon; but you will find everything in apple-pie order."

"Thank you!" replied Frank. "Prepare dinner, and let it be served in the library."

"The library! It has not been used this many a day," answered the butler, "and I fear you will find it damp."

"Hoot, toot!" exclaimed Andrew. "I'll see to 'a' that. Gie me your keys, I'm master here now."

"Hush, Andrew," said Frank. "Do not be hasty."

"But I'm your honour's ain servant, and you promised me that I should have control of the manor, so I'll e'en tak' his keys and send him packing to-morrow. I ken him weel for a fause loon."

"I never did you any harm, Mr. Fairservice," pleaded the butler. "And if you wanted anything while you were gardener, you know that you only had to come to the pantry for it."

"Aw! that's a weel enouch. You were ever ready to gie awa' what didn't belong to you," replied Andrew, somewhat ungratefully.

The butler reluctantly led the way to the library, the door of which he opened, and, as if to contradict his words, a bright fire burnt in the grate, while the room showed symptoms of

being recently occupied, as some books were lying open on the table.

"How is this?" cried Frank. "I thought you said the room was damp?"

The butler muttered something about the housekeeper having lighted a fire in case his honour should come down unexpectedly, and hurried away, with Andrew at his heels; the latter being determined that he would show his authority and get his master a good meal, if there was any possibility of doing so.

Frank sank into a chair and gave himself up to meditation. Of course his thoughts were all of Diana Vernon, and he wondered if ever he would see her ravishing form again. While he was meditating he noticed that some of the shelves on the right hand side of the library were a little out of the perpendicular, and he rose to examine the cause of it. To his great surprise, he found that they formed part of a secret door, which had been imperfectly closed, possibly in the hurry of those who had last passed through it.

Throwing the door open, he disclosed to view a wooden staircase, which he did not hesitate to ascend. It conducted him to a room over the library, of the existence of which he had hitherto been ignorant, and when he reached the top he saw two people sitting at a table, in whom he recognised Diana Vernon and Father Vaughan.

"Diana!" he exclaimed, much moved.

"Oh, Cousin Frank," she replied, "I implore your protection for a few hours. We hope to have friends here soon who will enable us to reach France."

"What friends?"

"The Macgregor and some of his men, disguised as cattle dealers. At present we are hunted and proscribed as traitors."

"It is too true," said Father Vaughan. "Since the collapse of King James's cause we have, like the Son of Man, had no place to lay our heads; the sufferings this poor girl has undergone would move a heart of stone. Not knowing where to go, we came to the old hall and hid ourselves."

"You are welcome to stay as long as you please," said Frank, "and I am only too glad to have you as my guests. Come down into the library; no harm shall befall you."

"But we are traitors," exclaimed Diana. "By harbouring us you subject yourself to severe pains and penalties."

"All that I will risk. To suffer for you, dear Diana, would be a pleasure. There is nothing I would not undergo for your sweet sake."

"Ah, me!" she replied, with a sigh. "I seem to bring trouble on all with whom I am connected."

"We are afraid of Rashleigh," said the priest. "He is the most active of our persecutors. We have received information that he is in the neighbourhood with a warrant for our apprehension. As for this poor child, they could but imprison her for a time. My life I know is forfeited."

"I have influence with the Government," answered Frank, "and I do not think I am over sanguine in saying that I can get a pardon for you."

"If we can get over to France we are safe, and need ask no favour of the Hanoverians," replied Father Vaughan.

He seemed only anxious to convey Diana to a French convent, whose walls might enclose her loveliness for ever. Suddenly there was heard a great trampling of men's feet outside and a loud knocking at the street door.

"Oh, heaven!" cried Diana. "We are discovered."

"It is all over. We are delivered into the hands of our enemies," groaned the priest, who fell on his knees before a crucifix.

Frank drew his sword and stood at the top of the stairs. He had not waited long in this position before there was a wild yell in the library. The secret door had been discovered.

"Idiot that I was not to close the door," muttered Frank.

The next moment several armed men rushed up the staircase, and Frank fell back, seeing that it would be useless to fight against such

odds. They were followed by Rashleigh, who smiled bitterly when he beheld the group which was revealed to him.

"Soho!" he exclaimed. "I have bagged more game than I expected. It is well."

"How dare you enter my house, sir?" demanded Frank, fiercely.

"It will be your house no longer," replied Rashleigh, with an odious grin. "I have here a warrant for your arrest on a charge of harbouring Papists."

A little fussy man pushed his way up the stairs. It was Mr. Jobson, the clerk of Squire Ingleton.

"Warrant applied for under the 13th statute William the Third, duly granted and executed for misprison of treason. Penalty, five years' imprisonment and confiscation of all goods and chattels whatsoever."

Frank gave the attorney a kick which sent him sprawling down the stairs a great deal quicker than he had come up.

"That for your warrant," he exclaimed.

"No violence!" cried Rashleigh; "we are prepared to resist force by force. Miss Vernon and Father Vaughan, you are my prisoners, and I shall convey you to the county gaol for safe keeping. You will at least have the consolation of knowing that Mr. Francis Osbaldistone is languishing in the same building with you."

He accompanied this speech with a look of inexpressible malice.

"I should have thought that a kinsman would have been the last to persecute me," remarked Diana, "more especially as he professed so much regard for me formerly."

Rashleigh turned up the whites of his eyes.

"I am merely the passive agent in the hands of the Government which employs me," he said.

"Hypocrite!" cried Frank.

"It is time we were making for the gaol," said Rashleigh, "or we shall be overtaken by the darkness. Will Miss Vernon be good enough to make her toilet?"

Diana put on a hat and threw a shawl over her shoulders.

"I am ready, sir," she answered, with dignity.

Fearlessly, like Marie Antoinette going to the scaffold, she led the way from the room, Rashleigh following. Next came Father Vaughan, with clasped hands and bowed head, telling over his beads; then Frank, and after him the soldiers. Outside the house was an old-fashioned family coach, which easily held four, and when all were embarked it started at a slow pace, the soldiers, who were twenty in number, dividing themselves into two parties, one going before, the other behind.

The prisoners did not speak, for their minds were filled with gloomy apprehensions, and if they regarded Rashleigh at all it was with looks of loathing and aversion. For some distance they proceeded in the same state of melancholy and oppressive silence. All at once the coach stopped. Rashleigh put his head out of the window, and saw a quantity of cattle struggling along in the charge of a number of men dressed like drovers.

"Clear the way there," he cried to his men.

The soldiers began to push the cattle on one side so as to make a path for the coach, a proceeding which was resented by the drovers, who from remonstrances came to blows. It appeared that they carried arms underneath their clothes, for revolvers and swords were produced. When the first shot was fired Rashleigh sprang from the coach, shouting:

"A rescue! a rescue! Cut the vile knaves down!"

Andrew Fairservice, who had followed the carriage at a distance, now came up and exclaimed:

"Fight for my master, Mr. Francis Osbaldistone. Draw your swords, like brave men and true."

Rashleigh immediately passed his sword through his body and he fell weltering in his blood.

"A truce to your idle prattling, knave," he said.

The leader of the drovers made his way to the front, sword in hand.

"Have at you for that cowardly thrust, Rashleigh Osbaldistone," he exclaimed. "But you were always the one to kill an unarmed man."

"Ha! you know me?" exclaimed Rashleigh.

"I ought to."

"And I you. If I am not mistaken you are—"

"Rob Roy Macgregor," was the reply, as their swords crossed.

"A Campbell! A Campbell!" cried the men, who were all stalwart Highlanders under the leadership of their chief Campbell, disguised and driving cattle to avert suspicion, their real object in crossing the border being to render what service they could to Father Vaughan and Miss Vernon.

The battle now waged with great fury, but the soldiers were outnumbered by the Highlanders and fell fast. Frank alighted and fought with the latter. Shots were recklessly discharged. A bullet flew into the carriage, and narrowly missing Diana, lodged in the heart of Father Vaughan, who fell prostrate. Diana was terribly alarmed, crying loudly for help, but none came to her assistance. His foot slipping, Rashleigh lay at the mercy of Rob Roy, who shortened his sword to strike.

"You are at my mercy, villain," he exclaimed.

"I do not ask for it," replied Rashleigh.

"Remember how you betrayed me to death. Recollect how you destroyed King James's plots. Think of the ill work you are engaged in now, and say if you deserve to live."

"Strike."

The Macgregor plunged his sword into his body, and Rashleigh, with a groan, fiercely tore at the stones in the road as if to assuage his agony.

"My curse upon you," he murmured. "May you be hunted like a deer while you live and never die in your bed."

Rob Roy turned away from him with a contemptuous look, and assisting his men soon routed the soldiers, who were discouraged by the fate of Rashleigh. Those who survived fled, but they were only four in number as they left eight dead or dying on the field. Frank and he shook hands cordially.

"Back to the Hall," said The Macgregor. "You will be safe there now Rashleigh is dead."

"Rashleigh dead!" repeated Frank.

"He fell by my hand. Yonder he lies."

Frank went to look at him and render him any assistance if he were yet alive, though Rob's words led him to suppose that his spirit had already quitted the body, but it was not so. He still breathed, and when he saw his cousin his eyes lighted up with a venomous, snake-like fire, and he raised himself up on his elbow.

"Ha!" he said, or rather hissed. "You have come to gloat over my dying agonies."

"On the contrary, I would soothe your last moments," replied Frank.

"I want no man's pity. As I have lived so will I die, and with my last breath I curse you as I cursed The Macgregor. May you never be happy. I hate you as much now as I have always done."

"Foolish man," Frank said, compassionately, "what harm can your hate do me?"

"I—hate—you," gasped Rashleigh.

His face turned livid, a rush of blood to his mouth choked his further utterance, and he fell back dead. Frank returned to the carriage and was inexpressibly shocked to find Father Vaughan in the same state as Rashleigh, and Diana in a swoon. The Macgregor removed the body.

"I will bury the bodies," he remarked, "and then hey for Bonnie Scotland. No thanks. Help me with the Government if you ever get a chance. Go back to the Hall, as I told you, and send to London for a pardon for Diana and yourself. Your father has done the king so much good, he cannot refuse you. Fare thee weel."

He gave his hand a hearty grip, adding:

"Think sometimes o' the clachan o' Aberfoill."

There be warm hearts under the Macgregor tartan."

Frank got into the coach, taking Diana in his arms, and was driven back to the Hall. His mind was in a whirl at the quick succession of events. Father Vaughan was dead, and perhaps Diana would reconsider her determination to embrace a conventional life now that she was removed from his influence.

She looked unusually lovely as she lay still and motionless in his arms. He could not resist the temptation of imprinting a kiss on her lips. At length they reached the Hall, where Turner, the butler, though much surprised, received them with open arms.

Frank placed Diana upon a sofa, and summoned the housekeeper to her assistance. She speedily opened her eyes, but burst into lamentation when she remembered what had happened. It was in vain that Frank endeavoured to comfort her, so he left her till the next morning. That evening he despatched a post to his father. The next day Diana came down to breakfast, and seemed calm and resigned. She listened attentively to Frank's account of all that had happened, and his plans for the future. When he concluded her tears fell fast.

"There is no one but you, Cousin Frank, in the wide world to look to," she exclaimed, "unless I seek refuge in a convent."

"Which you shall never do," he replied, "as long as I have any voice in your councils. Oh Diana! you know how long I have loved you! Why not be mine?"

She cast down her eyes, he caught her in his arms, for he felt he had won her, and he rained kisses on her lips, she making only a feeble resistance.

"Be mine, darling; be mine," he urged.

"I am yours," she replied. "Yours till death."

Then the union of two loving hearts was accomplished. That day Frank sent for the clergyman of the parish, who made them man and wife; for he was anxious to have the ceremony solemnised at once, as he was afraid that something might happen to rob him of his beautiful bride.

In due time his messenger returned from London with a full pardon for the fair Jacobite, none being required for himself, as his arrest was only a daring ruse on the part of Rashleigh. Mr. and Mrs. Osbaldistone decided to live at the Hall. Diana was very happy in the love of her husband, and as years went on and children grew up around them, he adored his wife more than ever, if such were possible to such intense affection as his.

Mr. Osbaldistone continued to increase in wealth and prosperity with Owen as his partner. Rob Roy did not disturb the Government again. He gave up levying black mail and harrowing the countryside, so that the authorities let him alone; and in spite of Rashleigh's curse, The Macgregor died in his bed at a ripe old age, surrounded by his family.

Baillie Nicoll Jarvie long continued the oracle of the Saut Market; but he was tired of talking about his journey to the Highlands, where "ma conscience," he "came vera near losing his life mair than once up in the clachan o' Aberfoill," and he never put out his hand farther than he could draw it back again.

[THE END.]

You can almost tell that a young man has been ground through a school of elocution when you hear him get up and recite "Rock tin theke radle of thede eape." We don't know what it means, but that is what he says.

JOSEPH BILLINGS writes: "In some respects a man resembles a silver coin. He can do more good by being good than by appearing good when he is not good." This thought was engendered by receiving a bad half-crown in change.

A MECHANICAL genius has invented a screw propeller which can be used with a Boyton's dress. It is light, cheap, and strong, and will send the fish along at four, or even five, miles an hour—bar sharks.

THE FORCED MARRIAGE;

—OR—

JEW AND GENTILE.

CHAPTER XXII.

SISTER FELICIA—for such was still her wish to be called—left the reception-room at the physician's kind suggestion, and went to her room for the remainder of the day, the doctor promising that her place should be filled during the hours of her absence by another attendant. With a deep sigh her new friend saw the slender, graceful figure depart, and turning to his desk, murmured:

"The ways of Providence are often hard to trace. That poor child's life has been poisoned by those who should have protected her. I was an idiot to heed for an instant the slanderous words of Upton, for I have always known him to be a scoundrel, whereas Sister Felicia's sweet face should have convinced me of her purity."

He started suddenly, for a noise in another part of the room attracted his attention. He looked in the direction whence it came, and from behind a screen of books saw Saunders, the convalescent, slowly emerge, his pale face haggard with deep emotion, and his eyes filled with a horror which for a moment caused the good physician to fear that his old malady was returning.

"Ha! Saunders, is that you?" he said. "Your sudden appearance quite startled me, for I did not know you were in the room. You are not feeling as well as usual to-day, I fear. Sit down and calm yourself."

"Doctor," replied the other, in a hollow voice, "I have heard everything. I lay sleeping upon the sofa behind that screen; voices awoke me. Like a coward I remained where I was. I neither stirred nor spoke while that noble woman whom you call Sister Felicia, but whom I once called my wife, was traduced and insulted. I tried to stir. I essayed to come forward in her defence, but every limb seemed paralysed. I could not stir."

"My good sir," the physician soothingly replied, "it is most unfortunate that you should have been a listener to the conversations which have taken place here this morning. They were so distressing that I do not wonder they have painfully impressed a mind which illness has made so susceptible."

"Doctor," cried Saunders, excitedly, "you will drive me mad in truth if you longer keep up this notion of insanity with which you have all invested me since I came to this house. Listen to me. I am not the man you have taken me for. I am not that unhappy maniac named Saunders whom you received here, and who, a few hours later, made his escape. You never found or brought him back. Instead, your attendants discovered Edward Aveling, of Ashurst, lying beside the road, he having escaped from his home, which, in a paroxysm of fevered frenzy, he had set on fire. Doctor, I have deceived you all! I did so with a deliberate purpose; but within the last hour it seems as though a moral electric light had revealed to me my innermost character, and I am aghast at the revelation. I need human counsel, yes, and divine aid, for I now see the path of duty lying plain before me. Will you listen to my story?"

The physician looked narrowly at his patient, doubtful if he were listening to the wanderings of a disordered brain, or whether it was a quickened conscience which prompted the self-accusation. The supposed Saunders detected the uncertainty in the mind of his companion, and exclaimed:

"Pray, sir, do not your own eyes now convince you that I am speaking the truth? Have you never seen Edward Aveling? I know that illness, mental depression and acute remorse have aged me beyond casual recognition, but can you

not detect in me some likeness to the man, who is supposed to lie dead beneath the ruins of Ashurst?"

The doctor replied:

"My dear sir, I wish I might answer your question in the affirmative, but I am a comparative stranger in this neighbourhood. The Mr. Aveling of whom I have heard much was said to be absent the greater part of his time, so, to tell the truth, I never met him but once, and that was for so short a time that I could not again recognise him. But I think there is a person in this house, a Mrs. Markham—"

"The housekeeper at Ashurst?" cried the convalescent, joyfully.

"The same. She will undoubtedly be able to identify you with her master, if such a thing is possible."

"Hear my story first," answered the other, detaining the physician, as he arose to ring for Mrs. Markham. "Hear my story first, and then let the woman be called. I have kept it secret too long. I am impatient to proclaim it first to you and afterwards to the world, for never until this moment did I realise how fearfully I have added to my guilt by my silence."

The physician let go his hold upon the bell-rope and resumed his seat, now regarding the countenance of his patient with deeper interest than ever before. He noted that his excited manner had been replaced by an earnestness and steadiness which was entirely opposed to maniacal tendencies, and at the same time the watchful practitioner could not also help observing that the resolve which seemed to animate the man had brought with it a marvellous physical gain.

"My story is a long one," he began, "but I trust you will grant me the time in listening to it."

"By all means, my dear sir. Be as circumstantial as you choose, for you have already interested me most deeply."

"Then I shall begin by repeating the declaration I made to you a few moments ago. I am the son, the only son, of John Aveling, of Ashurst, who died, you may remember, a year and a half ago. My life has been a wild one. I have been reckless, dissipated, unprincipled. I need disguise nothing from you, sir, for were you so minded you could easily discover for yourself all, or nearly all, of what I shall tell you. My father, through mistaken kindness, installed my cousin, Mark Upton, as my companion, and in some sort as my exemplar. But this man utterly betrayed the trust reposed in him, misleading rather than guiding me; yet of him I will say little, for upon my shoulders really rests the chief burden of my misconduct."

"My father vainly strove to arrest me in my headlong career. I would make fair promises, but when temptation came I would weakly yield, and every time I yielded I found myself more firmly entangled in vice, so it became harder and harder to break away from evil influences. You are a physician, and therefore are well acquainted with some of the darkest as well as the brightest sides of humanity, and so may know of the many dangers and temptations which beset young men, and, alas! how frequently they yield to them."

"You know, too, that a man cannot long pursue a uniform course of misconduct; the moment will come when some deed more flagrant than any he has hitherto committed will stand out from the dark background of his career and mark an era in his life which always remains a blasting memory."

"Such an event occurred to me when I was scarcely twenty-one years old. It was at that time my unhallowed custom to frequent a certain establishment in a neighbouring town, where I was always sure of finding boon companions, for whom, on account of their superiority in age and in vice, I had at that time a strong predilection. They laughed at my follies; they encouraged my excesses; they profited by my lavish expenditure. I would even now blush to relate all the follies of which we were guilty; but one circumstance I cannot pass over."

"In the same town where this rendezvous of

which I have spoken was situated there lived a widow and her daughter, who, on account of their erratic lives, and decidedly limited mental capacity, were in one sense the butt of the town, and had forfeited the respect of the community."

"I do not know what suggested the idea, or what fiend prompted me to accede to it, but one night, in the midst of a wild orgie such as the place often witnessed, I was 'dared,' as the phrase is, to marry this Zaidée Picheron, the younger of the two women. Heavy wagers were laid as to whether, when I became sober, I would keep the rash promise I had given, and the next day, when partly recovered from the previous night's debauch, yet still wholly under the influence of evil encouragement—for the holders of the bets were interested in fixing my purpose—I married the girl."

"That sin was the first firm grip which Satan had upon me. From that moment my downward course was rapid. I hated the woman I had taken even while the ceremony was being performed. She and her mother, both of whom, when excited by liquor, were in the habit of wandering about the country like common tramps, demanded to be taken to Ashurst and installed there. I then, for the first time, opened my eyes to the extent of my folly; for what at first seemed only a mad adventure, which my base associates assured me could be easily managed, now became the bane of my existence."

I refused the demand they made, but compromised the matter by agreeing to supply them with certain sums of money as long as they kept the marriage secret. Finding me inexorable on this point they kept their agreement tolerably well, but the thought of their suddenly appearing before my father haunted me constantly, for I knew what would be the consequences to me should they do so."

"For over a year I led this life of misery. I was beset by fears when sober, and lifted to wild exhilaration when intoxicated; so the wine-cup was wreathed with a double charm. It was seldom that I met my wretched wife, for after my marriage I broke away entirely from me associates in the town where she lived. She and her mother continued their wandering life, appearing before me when the time came for them to receive their stipend, and then disappearing until another payment became due."

"At last, late one night as I was returning from a wine party of more than usual boisterousness, I met the mother without her daughter. Before I had time to recognise her she began pouring down upon me a terrible torrent of invective, accusing me of having killed her daughter, of having broken her heart, and of having hunted her to death."

"Astonished, and even touched by the woman's distress, forgetting for a moment the welcome release which such a death would bring to me, I endeavoured to calm the woman's excitement, and to glean from her some of the circumstances attending her wretched daughter's end. But I could make nothing of it. She only repeated her accusations against me; called me her daughter's murderer, exclaiming with almost every breath:

"'You have killed her! You have killed her! She is dead! She is dead!'

"The woman's grief was genuine; that was evident even to my then disordered mind; so I had no doubt that the event she deplored had really taken place. I offered her money, which she eagerly took. I begged her to take me to the place where her daughter lay, whether in coffin or in her grave; but she did not heed this request, only answering with that same cry:

"'You have killed her! You have killed her! She is dead! It was in vain that I begged for more definite knowledge. The woman's mind, like her daughter's, always in a most unsettled state, seemed that night utterly upset; and after our short interview she suddenly disappeared, slipping away from my side into the underbrush which bordered the road where we talked, and though I tried to follow her then, and sought to find her afterward, I never suc-

ceeded, until a later period when of all things I least expected or desired to see her.

"About this time my father, discouraged by my lavish expenditure, stopped all supplies, and then, again under the influence of Mark Upton's sly suggestion, I committed my first really criminal act. I forged my father's name to a large amount. A money-lender, by the name of Levy, held the paper. He and Upton, as I afterwards discovered, were plotting my utter ruin, Upton with the intention of so embroiling me in difficulties with my father that he would disown me and name him in his will as his heir.

"They almost succeeded in this, though to do the Jew justice I will say that he was a mere tool in my cousin's hands. The forged check in Levy's possession was the means of leading me into another most imprudent marriage. He had a niece, a shy, undeveloped young thing whose companionship and support were irksome to him. He demanded the payment of the note. I begged for further time and for another loan, for heavy gambling debts were pressing me so closely that I was driven to desperation.

"I begged hard for further accommodation, offered larger interest than even the most extortionate broker had ever demanded, but nothing would satisfy him except my compliance with one condition: If I would marry his niece he would do as I desired. I knew that I was entirely in his power. If he took that note to my father it would surely be the means of effecting my disinheritation. If I failed to secure another large loan I should be disgraced in circles whose ban no man can face.

"At last I yielded to the money-lender's scheme. For months I had believed myself free from that other marriage tie, for as neither Zaidée Picheron nor her mother came to me for aid I felt convinced that the latter's declaration respecting her daughter's death was true.

"So I married the little Jewess. I had no pity for her, for I was too engrossed by my own dangers. I never even looked at her either before, during or after the ceremony. I detested the touch of her hand when I took it during that impious mockery. When it was over and the time came for the witnesses to sign I saw that Upton had noiselessly entered the room; so then I knew that this was another of his villainies—that to wholly and for ever separate my father and me he had secured this marriage.

"I turned upon him in fury, and was met by the shocking announcement that the father whom I had so tried and grieved was dead. I rushed home to Ashurst, leaving my newly-made wife, my enemies, my reputation, to take whatever course they might. The news Upton brought was true; my father died suddenly, just after I had left his chamber where we had had a most distressing interview, and where, transported beyond all filial caution by Upton's villany, I had struck him so that he fell at my father's feet. I was filled with remorse, for I looked upon myself as the one who had hastened if I had not altogether been the cause of, my father's death.

"Shocked and overwhelmed, I knelt beside his dead body and vowed that I would entirely forsake my headlong career, that I would retrace my steps towards a better life, and I honestly intended to fulfil that vow. But oh, how tangled is that web in which the feet of the erring become involved.

"Levy, the money-lender, the day after my father's funeral, brought his niece, my wife, to Ashurst, and claimed for her her rights as mistress of my house. The bold request, coming like a command, angered me beyond description. I looked upon that marriage as upon a trap in which I had been caught by the bold scheming of Upton and himself. I deemed the ceremony invalid because my necessities had been taken advantage of to secure it; but I was a fool to think of extricating myself in that manner. Upton had secured the marriage certificate, purchasing it of Levy, who believed I had been left penniless; the rabbi and the witnesses were people of respectability, and I found I could in no way escape from the net in which I had been caught.

My wife was brought into my presence. Galled

by the chicanery of her uncle and Upton, my hate fell upon her as well as upon them. I scarcely glanced at her. I detested her so heartily I never considered that she was even more unhappy and unfortunate than myself. Her shyness, her angularity, her undeveloped manner, her downcast eyes and scarcely audible voice—all repelled me. She belonged to an alien race and faith, so I, who had proved myself recreant to every good and noble principle, let the full weight of my resentment fall upon the helpless innocent child.

"Finding I could not disallow or annul the marriage—it had even been publicly announced by the shrewd Levy—I sullenly assigned my unwelcome bride certain rooms in Ashurst from which I cruelly commanded her never to venture, lest she should offend my sight by crossing my path. I spared her no indignity. I think I was beside myself; there was no pity in my heart for her; in my self-righteous efforts toward reformation I never thought that I owed her any duty, any reparation for the harm which had been done her. I never thought of her except with dislike, so I banished her from my mind as much as possible.

"She obeyed my command and never obtruded herself upon my sight. How she lived, how she fared, how she spent the days, the nights, the weeks, the months, the summers and the winters of her imprisonment, I never asked. I did not care. If I ever thought of her at all it was with the wish that the same fate which had relieved me of one wife would also remove the other.

"And the prayer was answered. I was relieved from all duty toward the young Israelite. I found she had no claim upon my forbearance or upon my charity, but this knowledge came in its most hideous guise. I had almost reconciled myself to the inevitable; I was satisfied with the progress I was making toward retrieving the good name I had dragged in the mire of dissipation.

"I had returned to Ashurst after a long absence, thinking I would occupy myself with worthy pursuits! I was even thinking that in time I might forget the woman who called herself my wife, but toward whom I was still as resentful as ever, when I received a visit from the last person on earth whom I desired to see. It was the mother of Zaidée Picheron, my first wife, who suddenly presented herself before me that same stormy night of my arrival at Ashurst.

"Some instinct made me tremble when I beheld her, for I knew that a crisis in my life had come. She saw my alarm and did not hesitate to confirm and increase it. She proved to me the horrible fact that I had married a second wife while her daughter still lived. Inane as she was she showed me papers which proved that the wild words which she uttered were not the groundless wanderings of a disordered mind.

"She knew the advantage which she held over me. She accused me again of being her daughter's murderer. It was in vain that I reminded her that, save in one particular, I had acceded to all her demands. She would not listen to my explanations. She would not heed the friendly offers I made her. She was in a vengeful mood. Revenge was what she wanted, not money; and revenge she was bent upon having.

"I knew that with the paper she held it would be an easy matter for her to secure the vengeance for which she thirsted. She declared her intention of proclaiming my villany. I did not doubt her purpose. She left me breathing threatenings of dishonour. After she had gone I tried to rally from the despair into which her sudden appearance had thrown me.

"Pride was the feeling she most violently assailed. I had so wrapped myself up in my own self-righteousness, I so plumed myself upon the moral strength with which I had conquered evil habits, I held my head so proudly erect above the miserable follies of former years, that this sudden upheaval of the black past made me frantic.

"Where now was all my boasted strength? Of what worth was my reformation? Who was there even among my despised boon companions who could not soon point a jeering finger at me?

I could not stand it. Pride first prompted me to fly, then to return, and also to seek the suicide's refuge from shame. Do you know who stayed my death-dealing hand? It was the sudden dash of a woman's hand against my own. I was so heated with wild excitement that I did not know to whom the arm belonged.

"What followed is a blank, or at least a confusion, from which I can glean but little. I can only infer that illness and frenzy followed. I have a dim recollection of being ministered to by Upton, whom I confounded with a spirit of darkness. He seemed to be urging the fires of Hades into greater activity for my reception. I remember making a mad effort to extinguish them, but instead of growing less they spread about me; they pursued me, they licked my feet, they mocked and hissed at me.

"I fled from that blazing Gehena. I seemed pursued by demons who sought to drag me back and cast me into those flames from which I had escaped. I rushed on until a sudden darkness came over me, and I knew nothing more until I awoke to find myself in a hospital bed surrounded by strange but kind faces, and called by a name which did not belong to me.

"I knew that efforts were being made to bring me back to life and health, but I resisted such endeavours. Why should I come back to a life which promised me nothing but misery and disgrace? I wanted to drift away into oblivion. Every night when I closed my eyes I hoped they might not open upon another day. And thus I might have gone on until I did, indeed, settle into death or into that hopeless idiosyncrasy which you feared had not been for an influence which came in time to waken me from that apathy."

The speaker pressed his hand upon his brow to smooth the sudden spasm of pain which contracted it.

"You refer to Sister Felicia, do you not?" the doctor said.

"Yes," was the response. "I refer to Sister Felicia."

There was a pause in the convalescent's story, and for some moments he remained silent. He passed his hand across his forehead once or twice, and then resumed:

"My punishment for the various sins I have committed comes to me at last in a way I little thought. I believed that when dishonour threatened me the end had come; that I could endure no more, but within the last hour I have experienced an agony more poignant still. Pride has been humbled in the dust, but now conscience is thoroughly awake and its stings are terrible!

"Until this morning I never recognised in Sister Felicia the unprotected little Jewess who was forced upon me as a wife, and whom I so neglected and ill-treated. Remember, sir, we never met but three times, and upon each of those occasions she was so downcast that I had no fair view of her face; besides which I was myself so carried away by excitement that I was incapable of receiving correct impressions. These same reasons also prevented her from recognising me, and now I am so changed by illness that it would, indeed, have been strange had she known me.

"So for weeks, sir, I have been receiving benefits from the being I contemptuously spurned. The woman I despised and trampled in the dust has twice saved my life, once by staying my suicidal hand and again by winning me from the fatal inertia into which I afterwards fell. With gentlest touch, voice and manner she has brought me back to living interests. For her sake I resolved to make another effort to retrieve my prodigal youth. I despaired of ever winning her love, for how dared I, disgraced as I am, offer her mine? I only hoped to win her regard, and to so guard my future course that I would do her no discredit by cherishing her memory."

The doctor was here called away to minister to a sick patient, and requesting that Saunders would await his return, hurried away.

(To be Continued.)

THE burning of Rome is one of the scenic effects in Rubenstein's opera "Nero."



[THE RECOGNITION.]

LAURA LEE.

BILLY EVANS had been to college. But now he was teaching school to get means to return to college in the spring. I was in a country neighbourhood, and Billy was to board with Mr. Lee, and carried with him a trunk full of books.

But, as ill luck would have it, Mr. Lee had two pretty daughters. Jane was the eldest, but Laura was the fairest; Jane was the house-keeper, and a famous one—Laura could bake pies, cakes and puddings, but she was more fond of her books than of housework. So Mr. Lee sent her off to boarding-school, and she was quite accomplished.

Billy Evans thought to study a great deal during the long winter evenings, but somehow or other a pair of bright, soft blue eyes were always gazing up at him from the open page, and Billy's thoughts would stray from Blackstone to bracelets and neck ribbons, etc.; and Billy, full of impatience, would fling down the book and seek the ladies in the cosy sitting-room, and enjoy the conversation and laughter of Mr. Lee's happy family.

We said happy. After many weeks of sojourning in the family, Billy concluded that Laura was not entirely happy. He quizzed Jane about it, but could only get the one answer:

"Laura has her moods."

But one thing was certain; when Billy tried to bring her out of her sad moods he always succeeded, and the sadness seemed to wear away, and Laura was gay again. She seemed to watch for his coming from school in the evening, and always met him with a smile. Again, Jane was sometimes looking tawdry and in dis- habille, but Laura was always "tidied up"—at least, she always in the simplest dress looked neat, clean and sweet. So thought Billy Evans. But, poor boy (he was now twenty-two), he was fast losing his heart.

At last, upon a Sunday evening, after Billy had been home and talked to his mother about it, he took a favourable opportunity, when the other members of the family were off to church, to pop the all-important question. Now Billy was well favoured with black hair and eyes and a tall form, and was something of a favourite with the softer sex. Thereupon he was quite confident the simple-minded maiden would say "Yes."

But this one little time our friend William was slightly mistaken. Laura said very decidedly, "No!" and William was in a rage. He wore a black swallow-tail coat, and he was seen leaving Miss Laura's presence about that time of night with the swallow-tails at right angles with his tall person. Yes, William was mad! The jade; had she not deceived him—made him believe that she even loved him?

Now Laura's father was a well-to-do farmer, and Billy's father also owned a large farm; but there being many children, Billy preferred to

educate himself. So their lots in life were equal, and Laura had indeed seemed to encourage the staid William.

Monday morning came, and at breakfast Billy must meet the family. He would be very cool, chatty and indifferent. He heard the breakfast bell, and marched boldly to the dining-room. All were present except Laura.

"There, as I expected, Laura is laid up with a sick headache; serve her right."

But just then in came Laura with a plate of hot rolls, looking fresh and rosy. She smiled a "Good-morning" to Evans, and looked a little roguish; but Billy had his dander up, and summoning all his pride to his help, chatted away as though nothing had happened. He was sure that the secret was confined to himself and Laura. Evans said:

"Mr. Lee, do you go to the fox hunt on Wednesday?"

"Certainly; will you not go, Evans?"

"If I had my black mare here I would."

"You shall have my bay filly if you will accept of her."

"I will, and thanks," said Billy.

Tuesday evening he dismissed the school for one day, as some of the large boys also wished to go to the hunt, which put all in great good humour. But Billy was very distant towards Laura, and she, strange to say, began to like him.

She had from the first regarded him as a good fellow, but rather "soft." But Billy's courage was interesting. Laura and Jane, with numerous other young ladies, went over to the great meadows hard by, where the circle was to close in to witness the sport.

At three o'clock the company came in, a gallant set of horsemen, one hundred strong, with quite a number of foxes in the ring. The circle was made very compact, and then ten men on the fleetest of the horses were delegated to run down the foxes and knock them on the head with clubs. They were all armed with clubs, similar to the ball clubs of the present day. Evans was among this number, and rode wildly and recklessly hither and thither.

In good time all of the foxes were killed or captured. Then many of the party wended their weary way to their distant homes; but many others met at the great brick tavern for supper and a dance. Many young ladies of the neighbourhood were present, among them Jane and Laura. Evans danced with nearly all the young ladies present; but not asking Laura to dance once. He was a splendid dancer, too, as also was she. Laura was amused, and said to herself:

"I wonder how long this will last?"

Friday came, and Evans was as distant and disdainful as ever. Saturday was a holiday, but Evans spent the morning in close study. Blackstone suffered for one half day. Laura was busily engaged helping Jane with the Saturday's work. Afternoon came, and Laura was in one of her sad moods.

Donning her sunbonnet, she went this sunshiny day for a walk in the fields or woods, as the case might be. Evans caught sight of her face as she went out, and his heart smote him. Acting upon the impulse of the moment, he followed her, and upon reaching her side, said:

"Miss Laura, have you any objections to my joining you in your walk?"

As she turned to answer him he was struck with the utterly woe-begone expression of her countenance, and the hollowness of her voice—it had a far-away sound, as though speaking from a great distance. She said:

"No; come with me, Mr. Evans, I have something to tell you." After a pause, she went on: "Mr. Evans, you have always been kind to me, and I will tell you my story."

"Not if it gives you pain," said Evans, relenting.

"I am almost incapable of feeling pain, only a weary, stunned feeling, akin to suffering."

"Take my arm, Miss Laura."

She took his arm, and they walked on a few moments in silence. At length she said:

"When I was sixteen I was sent to the W—— boarding-school. I was a shy, country girl, but well grown and naturally brave. At first I was awestruck with the looks of the great brick seminary; but I soon said to myself, 'The building won't hurt you, and you will soon be familiar with all parts of it.' I found Mrs. Hale a cordial, sweet, grand, motherly woman, and was soon made acquainted with some of the young ladies, and some of the teachers.

"As I sat with Mrs. Hale in the parlour on that afternoon, a black-eyed, black-tressed, petite young lady of about my own age came in. She was introduced to me as Miss Clotilde Lacompte. She remained in the room a few moments, and before she left she put both arms about Mrs. Hale's neck and whispered in her ear, and then went dancing out of the room, curtseying to me as she went.

"Do you think you would like that young lady for a room-mate?" said Mrs. Hale.

"I am sure I would," said I, "but she might not fancy me."

"She just whispered to me, 'Give me that sweet lily for a room-mate, Mrs. Hale, and I will be ever so good.'"

"It is love at first sight, then," said I. "I know I shall like her; she seems so affectionate, and my heart longs, in this great building, for sympathy and love."

"It shall be so, then," said Mrs. Hale, "but Clotilde is impulsive and thoughtless. I shall expect you, Miss Laura, to restrain her a little—but very gently."

"Is she not an old scholar, Mrs. Hale?"

"No, she only arrived yesterday."

"I am afraid I cannot have much influence with her. I expect she has always had her own way; and then, Mrs. Hale, I am a little wild at times."

"I can trust you, Miss Laura—I will trust you both. If you need my counsel, come to me freely, and it shall never be withheld. I will tell you one thing, Miss Laura, as you are now a young lady, and under my care. We do not see many young gentlemen here, yet you will meet them in the street, and at church. I do not wish or design to put any watch or surveillance upon you young ladies; I want to put you upon your honours. It is not best for you, while here, to make many gentlemen acquaintances, or you would have a stupid time, and I wish you to have a good time, and enjoy yourselves."

"Everything went on swimmingly for a few months. Clotilde was generous, affectionate, and apt to learn. She would say:

"Now, Laura, let us get our lessons quick, and then we shall have time to talk, or walk, or visit some of the other girls."

"So we did, for I was also quick to learn. We had an acquaintance in the town, a Miss Loretta Kane; a tall, sweet, kind, young lady. She was about our age, and frequently invited us to her elegant home on the outskirts of the town. She had brothers, and they were handsome, but neither Clotilde nor myself took any particular fancy to them, nor they to us.

"But one lovely Saturday afternoon as Clotilde and I strolled along arm-in-arm, we passed the Mansion House, the principal hotel of the place, and Colonel Kane, who was a great favourite of the college students, stood on the porch, and two young men near him. We bowed to the colonel, and he raised his hat and saluted us very politely. The young men regarded us very attentively.

"Those students will know us when they see us again," said I.

"Yes," said Clotilde; "but aren't they handsome—especially the one with the black eyes and the black curly hair?"

"Yes, but I think the one with the light hair and blue eyes the handsomest," said I.

"Well, you can have him, and I will take the other," said Clotilde.

"We said no more about it at the time. However, the next Saturday we paid a visit to Loretta Kane. We had not been there long when in came Colonel Kane, and with him the

two students whom we had seen in his company the previous week.

"The colonel introduced them to Loretta, and she presented us to the young men, in her easy, graceful, unaffected style. We soon became acquainted. Clotilde was a good player, and I had a good contralto voice. Loretta sang soprano, and the young men also sang well—one a strong, heavy bass, and the other a sweet tenor. Therefore, you may calculate, we spent an hour or two very pleasantly.

"When the young men arose to take leave Loretta gave them a polite invitation to repeat the call, which they did not fail to do, and we frequently met them under the hospitable roof of Colonel Kane. On one occasion the young men accompanied us almost home, when I spoke to Francis Romain, who was with Clotilde in advance of us.

"Mr. Romain, I regret it very much, yet I must say, 'thus far shalt thou go and no farther.' If you wish to meet Clotilde again, you must not be seen by the madame; she might not like it."

"Clotilde said, archly:

"And Mr. George Halifax, if you wish again to enjoy the company of the fair Laura, you must accept prudence as the better part of valour, and scamper back to college."

"By this time there was a good understanding between us, and the young men laughingly bade us good-afternoon, and we parted. I was not quite sure but what I ought to acquaint Mrs. Hale with our new-found friends, and ask if it was proper for us to meet them so often at Colonel Kane's. But the boys seemed greatly in love with us, and Clotilde was much pleased with Romain, and I confess I was greatly interested in young Halifax. He was about eighteen, well grown, and so intelligent and polite. Romain was about the same age, and they were precisely of a height.

"I did not say anything to Mrs. Hale as yet. I must now pass over many things that occurred, but I will tell you of the fire. Romain and Clotilde were romantic and headstrong. One day Romain put a stout packet into a satchel that Clotilde had carried up town with us, and she did not explain to me until we were safe within our own room that it was a rope ladder.

"Now, Clotilde, what in the world are you going to do with that?"

"I will not tell you now, but I will before long," she said.

"True enough, one very dark evening, about half-past eight, out came the rope ladder.

"What are you going to do, Clotilde?"

"Then she told me that the boys would come beneath our window, and we would let down the rope ladder that they might ascend, and we would have a good talk, and Mrs. Hale nor the teacher, nor anyone else, would be the wiser. It was a foolish, hazardous, unmaidenly trick, and I opposed it stoutly.

"Oh," said she, "such things have been done before, and no harm come of it; only this once—"

"No," I said.

"But," said Clotilde, "I have promised the boys this once, and they will be here, and be greatly offended if we do not let them in. Just this once," pleaded Clotilde.

Not wishing to offend George Halifax—although I had made no promises—I at length reluctantly yielded. Sure enough, in a few minutes both the boys came into our room, and with the door securely locked we carried on a whispered conversation. At the end of half an hour I said:

"Now boys, go, and don't name this, on your honour, and do not think to repeat it again."

"But they did, and one evening I think Romain tried to embrace my foolish Clotilde: he had been drinking, and she resented it with dignity. She always carried an exquisite little highly-tempered dagger; she asked Romain for his hand, and lighting a match, she pricked him sharply on the back of the hand, and holding the match close to the scratch, she said:

"Mr. Romain, what is that?"

"Blood!" said he.

"Well, then, beware!"

"He apologised profusely, but they never came to us again in that way. As ill-luck would have it, the match that Clotilde threw away caught in some light stuff on the floor and thence communicated to the counterpane of our bed and soon the room was in a flame.

"Clotilde flew to the door, and gave the alarm. I seized the pitcher of water and dashed its contents upon the flaming curtains. But it was not sufficient, and the flames flew on. The boys had only reached the front of the building when someone threw up a front window, and cried out, wildly:

"Fire! fire!"

"The boys rushed into the front yard and to the front hall door. Without ceremony Romain rushed up to the second floor, and meeting Clotilde, he took her in his strong arms and bore her rapidly downstairs and to the front piazza. But George, more thoughtful, gave command to all he met to 'come below and get buckets of water'—a few of the servants following him and Mrs. Hale and some of the teachers.

"I called to the girls in the adjoining dormitories to fetch me their pitchers of water, and I kept dashing the water on the bed and curtains. But the draft gave new impetus to the flames. However, George soon arrived with his 'bucket brigade,' and he took my place, only remarking:

"Bravo! my good girl! give way now to me."

"I was entirely willing for that, and stepped aside. But I could not be idle. So I brought other pitchers of water and soon we had the flames subdued. But now came the inquiry as soon as we went below, how came it about? A fire in the room—how did it get started? But Clotilde spoke up.

"I lighted a match a few moments before and was careless where I threw it and it caught something light and thence to the counterpane of our bed, and in a moment everything was in a blaze."

"Mrs. Hale did not question us very closely, and we did not choose to tell more. Two years flew away on golden wings. Romain and Halifax were true to us, and we to them. At length I told Mrs. Hale of our chance meeting with the young men and how we met them occasionally at Kane's, but I never told her how they came to be so handy the night of the fire, and Clotilde and I both looked back to our indiscretion with considerable regret.

"However, the boys never alluded to it, and we were—as well as they—progressing handsomely with our studies, and the world to us was without a care. No—that is not quite correct. We thought sometimes, 'How will our love affair end? Will it pass away with our happy, thoughtless school-days?' Poor Romain, with all his brilliancy—and he was brilliant—we could hear sometimes of his getting on an occasional spree. But George was always with him and kept him out of scrapes.

"George would drink, but in moderation, and never lost his head. He was remarkably healthy and strong, and of a cool, calm disposition. I formed great hopes of him—indeed, I had grand hopes of him. He would, I was sure, make a great man, beloved by all, and by me most of all. I was also sure that he loved me.

"But examination day came, and Romain and Halifax were contestants. We all went to the college hall; it was crowded, and the brass band was there and thundered forth grand music. At length 'the conquering hero came,' and Romain was looking well. He was eminently handsome, with broad brow and a fiery eye, and dark waving locks. He spoke his piece nobly, made his grandest bow and retired while the band struck up. Clotilde grasped my hand so tightly that I feared she would press her finger nails through my palms—although they were both gloved. And when Romain left the rostrum I heard a great sigh of relief. I whispered to her:

"Romain has won the day."

"Oh, I am so glad," she said; and as I pressed her hand she looked at me and said: "No, darling, not glad, but relieved. I am not

at all certain that Romain has gained the day, but he did so well; did he not, my love?"

"She often addressed me thus:

"Yes," said I, "I am proud of him; but I think George will acquit himself with honour, don't you, darling?"

"Oh, yes, certainly, certainly—but see, here he comes."

"It was now my turn to grow pale, and my hand must have trembled a little, for she said, quickly:

"Don't fear; watch him!"

"George came out looking so well; he was twenty now, tall and graceful, and a finished speaker—finished in my eyes. He looked calmly around and his fine eye catching us, he made a most profound bow and a perceptible smile flitted over his countenance as we unconsciously bent our heads slightly, and gave him our smiles of encouragement."

"He commenced boldly, and spoke in a spirited manner for half-an-hour; then ending handsomely, with a fine burst of eloquence, he bowed himself off the stage, amid a burst of applause and a shower of bouquets. He returned to gather up the flowers and bowed his thanks, and the band struck up, and it was my turn to take a long breath."

"George has won," said Clotilde, "and fairly."

"But, Mr. Evans, I am becoming very tedious."

"Oh, pray go on. I am much interested; sit down on this old log—the sun is shining brightly and warm this fair March day."

Laura continued her story. She had become oblivious of all surroundings, and went where Evans guided her footsteps.

"Well, there is not much more to tell. We had our public examination. Clotilde and I got along nicely. Clotilde excelled in her poetry and music, and I in my composition and algebra. In the evening we had our reception, and Frank Romain and George Halifax were there. My father met George and liked him; and Clotilde's brother, a distinguished-looking man, was present and met Romain, and they became great friends; drank each other's health, the health of the ladies, the health of the faculty, the health of Mrs. Hale, the lady-like principal of our school, and Mr. Hale, the good-natured husband, and Colonel Kane's health, and then the boys were pretty 'mellow,' for the wine was fine stuff."

"At length we left school. Clotilde spent three weeks with me. The boys stayed with us a brief week, and then they went off to their homes. Romain lived in London and Halifax in Liverpool."

"They both studied law and were admitted to the bar in good season, and began the race of life in earnest and in the same city. But alas! alas! although they were true to us, as far as we knew, yet they were untrue to themselves. Halifax never drank to excess, yet he drank, and was with Frank when in a brawl he attempted to shoot an imaginary enemy, a peaceable young man. George interposed, and the bullet intended for another entered his head, and he fell back a corpse."

Evans supported with his strong arms the swaying body of Laura Lee.

"Now, Mr. Evans, do you wonder that I have no heart to love, no bright young life to bless any man with?"

"I do not now wonder at your conduct; you had so much to bear, and to occupy your thoughts. I almost wonder that you thought of me at all."

"Ah, Mr. Evans, I was beginning to forget; but your arrival startled me from my fancied escape from my brooding thoughts and life troubles."

"Do not call them life troubles, Miss Laura; you shall learn to forget. Will you not now take me as your true friend? Confide in me; remember that I always sympathise with you in your grief at the past awful experience, and forgive me for any recent coldness and neglect."

"Yes, and I forgive you, and now you must forgive me for my extreme selfishness. I was

amusing myself with your lively conversation and allowing myself to receive all your attentions that I might get away from my troublesome grief."

"You are freely forgiven, Miss Laura, and remember that I am your friend for ever."

"Thanks, many thanks, and now we must return," said Laura, wearily. "They will miss us, and mother will think we stay out too long; but Heaven knows the sunshine and the blue sky are dear to my sad heart."

As they walked quietly home Evans said:

"I will allude only once more to your sad recital; please tell me of Frank and Clotilde?"

"Oh, that is the saddest part of all. Frank, seeing what he had done, put the pistol to his own head; he fell beside his lifeless friend, and they faced eternity together. Poor Clotilde, in her home, received the sad news, and poor, impulsive child, after assuring herself of the truth of the terrible news, in a fit of partial insanity drove the dagger to her heart, and thus ended the terrible tragedy. I alone am left, and I do so long to go to the land of shadows."

"Say not so, Miss Laura, but rather thank the Unseen for the power vouchsafed to you to live and endure, for you will yet be happy, I trust."

My story is told. "But," asks some young reader, "did not Evans marry Laura Lee?" Yes, in two years he came for her, and she gave him all the heart she had left. But sometimes in after years he would surprise her with the old look upon her face, and he would say:

"My love, you have been thinking of the old, old time, have you not? Let it pass, darling. I love you all the more that I know you have a true heart. But it is entirely mine now, is it not?"

"Yes, entirely."

S.

AMERICAN v. ENGLISH FEMALE BEAUTY.

WHILE the beauty of the English girl may endure longer than that of her American sister, yet American beauty has this sovereign advantage—that it best bears close observation. The English beauty appears best at a distance, and grows homely as we approach her; the typical American beauty appears more attractive near at hand; in her case nearness brings enchantment. The American face bears the microscope mainly by reason of its delicacy, fineness, and mobility of expression—qualities that are only appreciated on nearness of inspection. The ruddiness or freshness, the health-suggesting and health-sustaining face of the English girl seem incomparable when partially veiled, or when a few rods away; but as she comes nearer these excellent characteristics retreat behind the irregularities of the skin, the thickness of the lips, the size of the nose; and the observer is mildly stunned by the disappointment at not finding the nimble and automatic play of emotion in the eyes and features without which female beauty must always fall below the line of supreme authority.

The English beauties of national and international fame, at whose feet the empire of Great Britain is now kneeling, are of the American type, but in England they are held simply as of average rather than exceptional excellence. The attractiveness of American women would appear to be the direct effect of climatic conditions, since beauty of the most precious sort requires fineness of organisation, delicacy of features, nimbleness, and sprightliness of expression. The same influence that makes the American female more handsome also causes her beauty to decay earlier than in Europe. The Englishwoman is less beautiful, less delicate and attractive between fifteen and twenty-five, yet she retains her beauty longer. Women, like plants, need abundant moisture, else they wither. The rains, the clouds, and the storms that enrobe castles and cathedrals in ivy, and keep the meadows green throughout the year, bring freshness and colour to the face; so

the English matron of forty-five or fifty is, perhaps, sometimes handsomer as well as healthier than at fifteen and twenty.

FACETIÆ

METROPOLITAN BOARD MEETING.

"The Metropolitan Board has to slaughter animals affected with pleuro-pneumonia, and it permits the flesh of such cattle to be sold as food to the poor."—"Daily News."

We have had forwarded to us the following report, for the incorrectness of which we can positively vouch:

CAUTIOUS MEMBER: "There's a fuss being made about our selling this meat. Don't you think we'd better have it destroyed?"

WAGGISH MEMBER: "Nonsense! We're only carrying out what the meat's meant for. Isn't pleuro-pneumonia another name for consumption?" ("Order.")

TIMID MEMBER: "I'm not so sure about that. I believe it's something to do with the rinderpest, or the foot-and-mouth disease, or trichinosis, or something—most infectious, I've been told. Supposing anybody died from eating this meat, couldn't they come down on us?"

LEGAL MEMBER: "Not individually; only as a joint-stock concern."

ECONOMICAL MEMBER: "Well, gentlemen, all I have to say is we've saved quite £333 for the ratepayers by going into the butchering line. As long as meat's cheap, the poor don't mind how nasty it is. I believe if we advertised 'Fine Pleuro-pneumonia Beef' at fourpence a pound we should find lots of buyers." ("Hear, hear.")

BUSINESS-LIKE MEMBER: "I quite agree with my friend who has just spoken. The objections arise from prejudice. I propose as a means to popularise this meat that we at once prepare a price list, say, of 'Our Celebrated Pneumonia Sausages,' 'Prime Pleuro Steaks,' and so on." (Applause.)

CANTANKEROUS MEMBER: "Well, gentlemen, before we do that, I should be glad to know if any member's tasted this sickly beef." (Up-roar.)

THE CHAIRMAN: "I must really object to such an insinuation. The members of the Board may occasionally eat their own words, but their own beef—never! (Chorus, "Never!")

CANTANKEROUS MEMBER: "Very well. Then let us have an exhibition of the meat in the Board-room."

BENEVOLENT MEMBER: "Yes, and have some cooked for the starving."

SCIENTIFIC MEMBER: "Ah, and a committee of medical men to watch the effect. I should much like to see what would happen if a hungry boy were to over-eat himself on this pneumonia beef."

WAGGISH MEMBER: "Why, the result is evident. It would be most de-pleuro-ble."

Collapse of Board, and an adjournment to luncheon—not off the pleuro-pneumonic meat!

—Funny Folks.

POSTAL NOTES.

It is stated that at the General Post Office the clerks keep themselves warm by "stamping their letters," except in extremely cold weather, when they are kindly permitted to "stamp their feet."

Letter carriers are said to communicate with each other in a secret language of their own—probably a sort of pigeon English.

In the navy the officer who superintends the despatch of the mails is called a post-captain.

Some years ago people were compelled to pay for their letters before they had them—a very pre-post-erous idea.

Envelopes are seldom more than about twenty inches in length; but we have seen a postal rapper of nearly six feet.

The Government are very liberal to postmen in the matter of clothes. Some of them have more D-liveries (as they call them) than they know what to do with.

Great regularity is observable in the money departments; everything, in fact, being done in the most post-office-order-ly way imaginable.

—Funny Folks.

THE PENALTY OF PRIDE.

CUSTOMER: "Yes, it suits me, but I'm afraid it will be so awfully cold."

SHOP-WALKER: "Cold, madame? Why, it is lined throughout with real Marten."

CUSTOMER: "Yes, and would be warm enough if one could be wrapped up in it; but it would be too awfully extravagant to have such expensive fur and not show it!" —Funny Folks.

EVERY-DAY BRITISH HEROES.

I.—The Hero of the Crossing.

1ST CITIZEN: Isn't Robinson plucky? He's going actually to cross the street!

2ND CITIZEN: "Yes; and that is why he has scribbled his will on the back of a letter, and entrusted it to my keeping."

1ST C.: "Poor, poor fellow! If he perishes, I shall never cease to cherish this toothpick he gave me as a memento. Ah, see how cleverly he dodged that Pickford's van."

2ND C.: "And now he is engaging a couple of bus horses single-handed. He hurls them back. Bravo, bravo!"

1ST C.: "This is getting more exciting every moment. See there! Yonder hansom will certainly run him down."

2ND C.: "Not so. What an athlete he must be to be able to vault over the horse like that!"

1ST C.: "Horror! He is down! Oh, that miserable post-cart. Oh, Robinson, my friend!"

2ND C.: "Come, look again. It has only taken the heel off one of his boots. Observe how nimbly he darts beneath the belly of the dray-horse."

1ST C.: "Alas! only to be impaled on the pole of that private carriage. I knew he couldn't do it."

2ND C.: "But he has. He is across. The collision has jerked him on the pavement. Listen! He is shouting to reassure us ere he faints—'Only two ribs gone! Now they are carrying him to the hospital.'"

1ST C.: "I am so relieved. Let us go at once and tell the Dangerous Driving Prevention Society about him. Perhaps they will give him a medal or something." —Funny Folks.

UNREASONABLE.

TRADESMAN (to country customer who has come to complain of the quality of his lucifer matches): "Not light? Why, I have only to draw them smartly across my cord breeches, and they blaze instantly."

CUSTOMER: "Yes; but what's that to me? I can't come a matter o' four miles for your old breeches every time we wants a light." —Funny Folks.

UNKIND.

WITNESS (about to give evidence with much pomposity): "My name is Jackson Jones and my profession is—"

JUDGE: "Never mind your profession; what's your trade?" —Judy.

STATISTICS.

THE DAILY PRESS.—According to the "Printer's Register" there are now 153 daily newspapers published in the United Kingdom, viz. 18 in London, 94 in the Provinces, 3 in Wales, 21 in Scotland, 16 in Ireland, and 1 in Jersey; 78 are issued in the morning and 75 in the evening, 70 are published at 1d., 69 at 4d., and the remainder (14) at prices varying from 1½d. to 3d. In politics, 65 are returned as Liberal, 42 as Conservative, and 46 as independent or neutral.

WATCH GLASSES IN THE UNITED STATES.—Fifty thousand gross of watch glasses—7,200,000 glasses—are sold annually in the United States. Most of these are imported from England, and the Americans are asking the question, why cannot these be produced in the States?

THE LAMENT OF AN ADOPTED FATHER.

ALREADY the last feeble relic of hope
Has fled from our hearts to which Tilly is
dear,

While, in their recesses, some faculties
grope

That stifle the moan and prohibit the
tear;

The bloom of a rose passes quickly away,
But little we thought that this blossom of
ours,

So tenderly cherished, would shortly decay,
And only delight us a few little hours!

We never imagined contagion's dread
hand

Would touch the one blossom that form'd
our store,

While many that once ornamented the
land

Live on through the winter, delighting
no more,

But, ah! Yellow fever, with flame in his
eye,

Commanded by death to fetch one that
was fair,

Observed the young blossom, while hurry-
ing by,

And brought her from under our fostering
care.

Yes, truly the messenger brought her,
because

It is not the lovely Matilda we see,
While e'er that image we silently pause,

And wish the poor sufferer's spirit was
free.

How glow the fair cheeks of incarnadine
now!

How flash the dark eyes with the lustre
of pain!

How deeply those agonies furrow that
brow,

So lately as smooth as the crystalline
pane!

Oh, weary lids close on those beautiful
eyes

You covered so oft, when our favourite
slept,

And open no more till the body shall rise
To where nothing foul or polluted is
kept!

Most freely, Matilda, we give thee to Him
Who gave thee to us, at the dawn of thy
life;

And faith, with an eye neither languid nor
dim,

Will see thee arise from this region of
strife.

Yet, shall we not miss thee, when, sadly we
see

Thy chair by the wall, as we sit by the
board?

When, under the shade of the wide-spread-
ing tree,

We think of thy sonnets, so often en-
cored?

When morning arrives, and thy parents
shall feel

No tender embrace and no lips on their
own,

No zephyr-like breath on their face to
reveal

The elegant scent of the blossom new-
blown?

Or, when we are drawn, by the log's ruddy
glow,

Around the old hearth, of a passionate
night,

And see not those features that used to
bestow

On each of our hearts, a mysterious
delight?

Yes, dearly beloved, occasions like these
Must bring us affliction and sadly recall

Our darling Matilda, whose mission to
please

Was always so truly performed for all!

W. B.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

MUSLINS.—Never wash muslins or any kind of white cotton goods with linen; for the latter deposits or discharges a gum and colouring matter every time it is washed, which discolours and dyes the cotton. Wash them by themselves.

LIME WATER.—Put two ounces slaked lime into a bottle containing one gallon of water, shake well for two or three minutes; after twelve hours decant the solution and keep it in a well-stoppered bottle.

MENDING INDIARUBBER BAG.—Get some of the Pharmacopial Solution of Gutta Percha. This will mend the indiarubber water bag. It simply requires to be applied under the edges, and, when the solution has been laid on a short time, apply a layer over the top of the crack, when it will be as good as new.

DUTCH ROLLS.—Sift three quarters of flour; break three eggs into a pint of cold milk, into which put a tablespoonful of yeast, and stir; out a spoonful of butter up and work it into the flour, and knead thoroughly; make into rolls, butter the pan, and stand by the stove to rise; bake in a quick oven.

MISCELLANEOUS.

In a supply of cards sent to a well-known club from America, 1,500 packs were returned because the ace of spades was on the back embossed in a fashion different from all the rest of the pack.

THE inquiries for Prince Louis Napoleon's watch have resulted in the discovery that the Zulus had pulled it to pieces, thinking to find money inside.

A TALKING machine is the newest London novelty. It is the production of Professor Faber, and, we believe, has long been known on the Continent. The machine, lying in a receptacle, is surmounted by a female head, through which the voice comes.

A FATHER writes: "It generally takes twenty years training to eradicate the word 'nice' from a woman's vocabulary. The Pyramids, the Psalms of David, and the progress of the human race, were all 'nice' to my eldest till she got married."

At Exeter Hall recently, between two and three hundred scene-shifters, flymen, carpenters, and others, were asked to a "thick tea." After the meal the tables were cleared preparatory to holding religious service, but to the mortification of the promoters of the feast, nearly the whole of the audience got up and left.

THE latest Yankee trick is worthy of the genius that invented wooden nutmegs. A London firm recently advanced money on a cargo of supposed oranges. But the cargo was principally sand, with the holes and crevices of the boxes carefully plugged with pieces of real fruit, which completely imposed upon the inspectors.

A PASTOR wrote in his memorandum book Gal. 1, Gal. 2, Gal. 3. A man looking over his shoulder, unobserved, at that could contain his remarks no longer. "I thought," he exclaimed, "your sect was no good, and you were the chief hump of the lot." My friend," was the quick reply, "they are not girls, but notes upon the Book of Galatians." Collapse of the man.

LADIES will wear waistcoats precisely like the gentlemen's this winter. This will cause fearful trouble. For instance, when a married man goes to bed he will have to put a chalk mark on his waistcoat, or next morning he may slip on his wife's and not discover the mistake until he inserts his thumb and forefinger into his right-hand vest pocket for that "half-crown," and finds a bent hair-pin or a dress button. Then, no doubt he will suddenly remember there was a sovereign in the left-hand pocket of his waistcoat, and a five-pound note in his watch-pocket, and then you will see him "do" a mile in about one minute and fifty seconds.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. C. D.—1. Cyril is pronounced thus: Seril. 2. The Jews Festival of Passover in their calendar commences in the first month (Nisan); that is, on March 27, and ends on April 3.

A. B.—You are bound to supply the goods. Whether he is a bad payer or not has nothing to do with it, and does not release you from your contract.

E. E.—Dissolve as much lump sugar as you would use to an ordinary cup of tea in the same quantity of warm water, and apply when cold to the eyes occasionally with a piece of clean linen rag. For inflamed eyes, dissolve as much sulphate of zinc as you can place on a fourpenny piece in half a pint of warm water. Apply night and morning. This is invaluable.

J. R. F.—1. We think that a plate license would be necessary. Any dealer in gold over 2 dwts. and under 2 oss., and in silver over 5 dwts. and under 30 oss., must pay £2 6s. To be obtained at the Inland Revenue Office of your district. 2. The Claimant was convicted in 1873 under the Gladstone Government.

J. S.—If you are twenty-one years old the creditors of your father could not touch any effects legitimately belonging to you.

ROVER.—The wish to go to sea possessed by so many young men proves in most cases a delusion and a snare. We are constantly meeting with young fellows in London streets in "third years" uniform who, having served the prescribed three years, are no longer required, and have to revert back to their former trades or positions. As a barman, your best course would be to apply to one of the steamship companies in Leadenhall Street for a berth as under steward.

CARRIE.—To make liquid glue, add sufficient naphtha to shalac to make it of the consistency of good cream. Leave it to dissolve.

MAX.—Soft corns may be cured by placing between the toes a piece of wool fresh every morning. "Medicated" cotton wool is simply pure carded cotton.

EMELINE K.—We cannot make any exception to the statement that a true marriage implies the reverse of dislike and scorn. Nothing in money matters justifies a father in forcing his daughter into such a marriage as yours would be.

FREDERICK.—We advise you to state the case to the young lady's parents and obtain their consent to your submitting the matter to her decision. Otherwise they may, and not without reason, censure you for engaging the affections of the young lady, and getting some confidences, when you were precluded from marrying for a few years.

A. B. C.—If the gentleman were a near relative, or a very intimate friend of the family, or a very old man whom the family respects, it might be proper for the young lady to accept a present from him.

DANIEL.—You should visit various shops and places of business, and see how you like the different trades. In that way you would find out the one that would be most congenial to you, and that would be apt to come within your strength.

L.—A lady has the right to continue the correspondence at her own pleasure.

ELISE.—You seem to do all that is possible to do. It is your husband who requires advice, but does not ask it, and probably would not take it. You can only do your duty; bear your trial, and hope for good results to your efforts to "overcome evil with good." Men who sin in this way usually pay the penalty sharply, and "in the sight of the sun."

PATRIARCH.—The ancient Teutons were accustomed to drink honey-wine after marriage for thirty days. So the time came to be called the Honey-month, or moon, and the name is now applied to so much time as a newly-married couple can take away from home after their marriage.

HENRY.—Guilds were first formed in Rome before the Christian era, and some of them became very powerful during the Dark Ages, and all through the horrible reign

of despotism which was first checked by the beheading of Charles I. the guilds of Europe were the seed germs of popular liberty.

SQUARE and COMPASS, an engineer, earning £2 10s. per week, would like to correspond with a young lady about eighteen, fond of music and dancing. Must reside in Queenstown or Waterford.

EDGAR, dark, blue eyes, good-looking, wishes to correspond with a lady about twenty-three.

LILLIE, eighteen, good-looking, tall, dark hair and eyes, would like to correspond with a tall, fair young gentleman.

JAMES S., twenty, a seaman in the Royal Navy, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young lady about nineteen.

WILLIAM B. and CHARLES S., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. William is eighteen, good-looking, fond of home and music, tall. Charles S. is nineteen, dark, medium height, handsome, fond of home and music.

MOLLY J., twenty, medium height, fair, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young man about the same age.

KATHLEEN, twenty, medium height, dark hair and eyes, loving, thoroughly domesticated, fond of home, would like to correspond with a young man about thirty, and of a loving disposition.

GOD BLESS THE LADS.

A LITTLE lad I used to meet,
Long years ago, in the street,
Whose pleasant smile and look of truth,
The sweet attractiveness of youth,
So won my heart that I would watch
Among the crowd his nod to catch,
That was, upon a cloudy day,
A bit of sunshine on my way;
And answering back with smile as glad,
I said, "God bless the little lad."

For him I felt an anxious care,
In all his interests had a share,
And planned what should his future be,
As if he had belonged to me.
As childless mothers, for the good
Of hearts instinct with motherhood,
Some little will will kindly take
And cherish well for love's dear sake,
So I, whose lot in life was sad,
Took to my heart this little lad.

I knew not who his parents were,
Or where he lived. What did I care?
Or if his garments were as fine
As I should give a child of mine?
My daily thought, my chief concern,
Was that he might no evil learn,
But strive in manliness to be
Foremost, and in integrity
To rise by every chance he had
To prove himself an honest lad.

'Twas years ago I used to know
This little lad and love him so,
And since our parting ne'er I've heard
Of him, or had a single word
To cheer my thoughts. Yet all the while
The recollection of his smile,
His hearty laugh, his look of truth,
The sweet attractiveness of youth,
In many an hour have made me glad
I ever knew the little lad.

I cannot think he went astray,
Or wandered in an evil way,
But must believe he's neat and trim
As when I first encountered him.
And when among the news I read
Of gallant or heroic deed,
I feel that he would do just so,
This little lad I used to know,
And so I pray, while tear-drops fall,
"God bless the lads! God bless them all!"

J. P.

C. T. W., twenty, fair, brown eyes, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young lady about nineteen.

C. J. and D. L., two friends, wish to correspond with two gentlemen with a view to matrimony. C. J. is medium height, dark, fond of music. D. L. is fair, fond of children, loving.

LAURA, POLLIE, and LIZZIE, three friends, would like to correspond with three gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Laura is twenty-three, fair, tall, of a loving disposition, domesticated. Pollie is twenty-two, dark hair, blue eyes, loving. Lizzie is twenty-five, tall, dark, thoroughly domesticated, good-looking, loving.

W. K., twenty-one, dark hair, blue eyes, handsome, medium height, would like to correspond with a good-looking young lady.

A. L. A., a seaman in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a young lady about eighteen, fond of home and children, dark.

ALICE M., twenty-three, medium height, fair, loving, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young man about eighteen, good-looking, brown hair, dark eyes, and domesticated.

WILLIAM, CHARLEY, and BILL, three seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with three young ladies. William is twenty-four, brown hair, blue eyes, fond of music. Charley is twenty-three, light brown hair, hazel eyes. Bill is twenty-two, black hair and eyes, fond of children.

LILLIAN, twenty-one, medium height, fair, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young man about the same age.

C. M., twenty-one, domesticated, dark hair and eyes, would like to correspond with a young gentleman about the same age.

EDITH and VIOLET, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Edith is twenty, loving, brown hair, hazel eyes, dark, thoroughly domesticated. Violet is eighteen, tall, fair, fond of home and music, of a loving disposition, and of medium height.

ALICE and CLARICE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Alice is nineteen, loving, fond of home, fair. Clarice is twenty, tall, brown hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition. Respondents must be about twenty-five.

CARRIE and AGNES, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men with a view to matrimony. Carrie is twenty-one, of a loving disposition, tall, dark, fond of home. Agnes is nineteen, domesticated, loving, fair.

JOHNNY and JAMES, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Johnny is twenty-five, curly hair, dark. James is twenty-one, fair, fond of dancing and music.

VIOLET and FLORENCE, two friends, wish to correspond with two gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Violet is eighteen, medium height, light brown hair and eyes, of a loving disposition, fair. Florence is nineteen, medium height, dark hair and eyes, domesticated, fond of music. Respondents must be dark, tall, and loving.

DAISY, eighteen, fair, good-looking, fond of home and children, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a gentleman.

HARRY, twenty-one, a seaman in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a young lady about eighteen, tall, dark, loving.

JACK, twenty-one, a seaman in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a young lady about nineteen, domesticated, tall.

M. H. B., twenty-two, a seaman in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty-one.

M. M. M., twenty-six, good-looking, fair, a mechanic, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty-three with a view to matrimony.

POLLY and LILY, two friends, wish to correspond with two gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Polly is twenty-three, fond of dancing, dark. Lily is twenty-two, fair, fond of home and children.

STRAP and RAZOR, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Razor is twenty-three, tall, dark, good-looking, medium height, fond of dancing. Strap is twenty-five, fair, of medium height, fond of music, good-looking. Respondents must be fond of home and music, of a loving disposition, and good-tempered.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

JENNIE is responded to by—Timothy G., twenty-three, fond of home, light hair, hazel eyes, medium height, and loving.

A. B. by—A. C., twenty, brown hair and eyes, fond of home and children, good-tempered.

GERTIE by—Samuel, twenty-two, dark, of a loving disposition.

FLAVIA by—Charles, twenty-three, light hair, blue eyes, tall, fair.

IRENE by—Jack, twenty-two, dark, medium height, loving, brown hair and eyes.

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